



Jordan Times

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Jordanians head for ballot boxes today

All our books are open — Armouti

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians go to the polls today after a troubled three-week campaign, marked by widespread accusations of election fraud and emergency measures by the government to contain the fallout. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday described the general environment of the elections as "good" and stressed that preparations at all levels have been completed. Speaking to reporters at the Prime Ministry, Dr. Majali said that candidates or their representatives can sit next to the ballot boxes to witness voting and counting procedures, and reiterated that polling stations will be open for all those interested to observe the elections. "All our books are open," said the official spokesperson for the elections, Mazen Armouti, echoing

the prime minister. Responding to opposition claims that today's elections would be rigged, Dr. Armouti told a press conference that "nobody can judge the elections a priori, before they are held." Last week, the government deleted 120,000 repeated and dead people's names from the voting lists, but opposition leaders still considered too high the official number of registered voters (1,838,223). "The government is trying to pretend that it is doing something [to ensure fair elections], but they just deleted a few thousands of [repeated] names, the ones that they themselves [had previously] created, to cover up for massive forgery," outspoken candidate and former Deputy Tounjan Faisal (Amman's 3rd District) told the Jordan Times in a recent telephone interview. In order to correct what it defined as "widespread

irregularities, a common practice in some rural areas," the government last week referred to the prosecutor general 11 candidates suspected of collecting forged cards with voting power of attorney documents, but representatives of groups boycotting today's elections described the government's step as inadequate. Some young voters especially in urban areas and among the highly educated, expressed disappointment at the concrete evidence of forgery and said they have lost hope in the next Parliament's capacity to represent them. "I am not voting tomorrow: I do not want to become part of this game," affirmed a 27-year-old businessman Monday. He said he would rather use the public holiday announced by the government on the occasion of elections day "to catch up with some work."

The official spokesperson for the elections declined to predict today's turnout, but maintained that the ratio of card-holders to registered voters — 80.51 per cent — suggest a "high interest" in today's polls (see related story on page 3). Dr. Armouti, however, noted that the percentage of card-holders is higher in rural and tribal areas. In densely populated urban areas, where the Islamists traditionally have their strongholds, analysts expect a lower turnout. Observers also suggest that the boycott call launched by the Muslim Brotherhood will be observed by a large number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Muslim Brotherhood Spokesperson Jamil Abu Bakr was quoted by Renter news agency yesterday as saying that "there is a strong possibility that the widest boycott will be in the areas which have a

strong Palestinian vote." According to Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre, which monitors and analyses Jordan's democratisation process, 857,500 voters, representing 58 per cent of card-holders or 42.8 per cent of eligible voters, are expected to cast their ballots. In the 1993 and 1989 elections, 68 and 62 per cent of card-holders turned out at the polling stations, respectively. According to official figures, 20 per cent of the 521 candidates contesting the elections are affiliated with opposition groups, including 32 Islamists. IAF leader Abdul Latif Arabiyat, however, rejected the government's categorisation. "Those [Islamist candidates] do not represent anybody but themselves, since they are running as individuals," Dr. Arabiyat told the Jordan Times on Monday. Five out of 20 political

parties are fielding candidates in today's elections. The pro-government National Constitutional Party (NCP) is fielding 12 official candidates, in addition to at least 15 "Stealth candidates," so-called after the U.S. fighter plane equipped to elude radar detection. Not revealing their affiliation to the party, the Stealth candidates believe they have better chances of winning larger portions of tribal votes. The Jordanian Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party (the pro-Iraq faction of the Arab Ba'ath) has fielded five candidates, including its secretary general, Khalil Haddadin (Amman's 3rd District). The Jordanian Communist Party has fielded one woman candidate, Emily Naffa (Amman's 3rd District), and the small Islamist movement Do'a is running



Schoolgirls walk past a wall plastered with portraits of candidates running for parliamentary elections in Amman yesterday. The elections are held today (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

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By Ghafila Alni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Eleven of the 49 candidates, competing for the seven Muslim and two Christian seats in the southern district of Karak, announced last-minute withdrawals because of what observers describe as their "weak electoral bases." Although none of the candidates said they were withdrawing in favour of other

11 Karak candidates announce 'last minute' withdrawals from the race

candidates, the move could still strengthen the chances of those still running, observers in Karak say. Four of those who withdrew on Monday — Majed Qaralleh, Abdul Rahman Khatatneh, Salem Matarnah and Saber Rawashdeh — were all from the town of Aiy south-west of Karak, thus boosting the chances of their kinfolk. Ahmad Kasasbeh, Fathi Rawashdeh and Rafeh Qaralleh at today's elections, observers say. "When these candidates realised that their chances were slim, they decided to

withdraw, which gives other contestants better chances," an observer from Karak told the Jordan Times Monday. Some observers say the withdrawals of Aiy candidates would not enhance the chances of the publisher of Al Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper and founder of the popular Shihab weekly, Riyad Hrouh, who comes from the same town. Other observers, however, said the withdrawals coupled with Dr. Hrouh's reputation in the media industry would improve his chances.

Meanwhile, election watchers in the district of Karak see the withdrawal of Mifkeh Oshbar, Radwan Ja'arat and Mohammad Bawwar, who hail from the southern Ghor, as bolstering the chances of their fellow candidates, former member of the 12th Parliament, Jamil Eshoush, and Atallah Oneh as well as Awad Kheifaf. Jamil Eshoush, who in the 1993 elections, won with 2,721 votes, is tipped by observers as a winner in today's polls. Also among the candidates who withdrew from

the district were Abdul Rashid Ma'aytah, Rizeq Ma'aytah, Khalidoun Mawajdeh and Hamed Bdeirat. All 11 candidates pulled out from the race during the past three days. The remaining 38 candidates in Karak will be vying for the support of 91,432 voters who are expected to head for the ballots today. Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre in Amman predicts that only 65,000 voters will cast their votes

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan furious at Israeli try to prevent aid cash transfer

Congress too is 'incensed' at Israeli procrastination

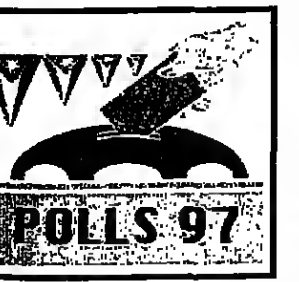
The following article is reprinted from the Nov. 3 issue of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. It was written by its correspondent in Washington Yerah Tal.



JORDAN AND the U.S. Congress are incensed at Israeli attempts to demonstrate that money slated for aid to Jordan from the United States actually belongs to Israel. Jordan's ambassador to the United States, Marwan Muasher, told Haaretz that Israel's attempt to create the impression that \$50 million to be transferred into a special aid fund for Jordan is its money, has irritated not only Jordan but the Congress as well. Jordan protested to the American government that its citizens were receiving no benefits from peace and asked that its annual aid be increased from \$75 million to \$250 million. The Americans agreed to raise the sum to \$225 million, out of which \$120 million would be taken from aid to Israel and Egypt. Ultimately, aid to Jordan was delayed because Israel

objected to its allocation being cut, to avoid creating a precedent. This angered members of Congress, which decided to delay aid to Israel as well. The dispute was solved after Israel undertook to itself the transfer of \$50 million to Jordan upon receiving its aid in full from the United States. Dr. Muasher said that the Khaled Misha'al fiasco had severely harmed Israeli-Jordanian relations and it would take a long time to restore the relations harmed by the affair, and expressed hope that the Israeli-Palestinian talks to take place in Washington would achieve progress, otherwise the entire regional peace process would be endangered. Dr. Muasher, who served as Jordan's first ambassador to Israel, claimed Israel was causing difficulties in trade relations

(Continued on page 7)



By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Candidates in the northern regions of the country have mobilised their resources to get as many voters as possible to vote for them today, according to observers. Candidates have enlisted the services of many of their fellow tribesmen and

Northern candidates mobilise resources to transport voters to election centres

associates together with buses and taxis to transport voters to the right station to cast their ballots. These efforts stem from the apathy towards election displayed by voters in Irbid and Ramtha. Observers attributing people's apathy to their lack of faith in the two previous parliaments and the opposition's boycott of the elections. In Irbid, Jordan's third largest city, were 60 candidates, including two women, are competing for eight Muslim seats and one

Christian seat, observers predict a low turnout among the 170,102 voters who collected their ballot cards. Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre Monday predicted that only half of the 208,373 registered voters will cast their ballots on Tuesday. The centre indicated that a candidate would need to collect between 3,750 to 4,000 votes to win a seat in the 13th Parliament. In the border town of Ramtha, the turnout of vot-

ers is also expected to be low, mainly because of disunity among tribes in some areas, and the disappointment over the move of the border crossing with Syria, 20 kilometres east of town. Seventeen candidates are competing for three seats in Ramtha. Of the 62,264 people who collected their voting cards, Al Urdun Al Jadid predicted only 40,000 will cast their votes. According to the centre, a candidate would need a minimum of 4,500 to 5,000 votes to win.

Unlike Irbid and Ramtha, the turnout in Mafraq, Kourah and the Northern Ghor District, is expected to be high, according to observers. Mafraq registered one of the highest percentages of collected cards to registered voters: 39,875 out of 42,062. Voters turnout in Mafraq is expected to be high, because of the pure tribal nature of the district. Observers predict that one

(Continued on page 7)

Iraqi president meets top military commanders amidst world tension

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein held a meeting with his top military commanders on Monday amid a crisis with the United Nations over U.N. weapons inspections. Radio Baghdad said President Hussein chaired a meeting of the General Command of the Armed Forces but did not say

what was discussed. It said the Iraqi leader's son, Qusai, who heads the elite Republican Guard, participated in the meeting. The meeting of Iraq's top brass came after Mr. Hussein's eldest son, Uday, was put in charge Monday of an elite volunteer force formed three years ago to defend Iraq. Uday supervised the formation of the paramilitary

force, the "Fedayin [fighters] of Saddam," in 1994 but was relieved of his duties last year. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said Uday, who was seriously injured in an assassination bid in December, had asked to head the force once again. The move came as Iraq's ambassador to the U.N., Nizar Hamdoun, issued a threat to shoot down a U.S. high-altitude

U2 reconnaissance plane used over Iraq to monitor Iraqi disarmament. Envoy Hamdoun threatened in a letter to the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) chairman, Richard Butler, to shoot down the U.S. aircraft and called for the cancellation of U2 flights scheduled for Wednesday and Friday. "I hope it would be clear that you assume the responsibility for the

results of your decision to send the spy plane to Iraq, especially in these circumstances in which our anti-aircraft artillery is open everywhere in anticipation of a possible aggression," the letter said. Meanwhile, the U.S. announced that it was deploying additional fighter aircraft to beef up its air

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli PM responsible for murder attempt fiasco, Mossad chief says

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The chief of the Mossad, Israel's secret service, on Monday charged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was personally responsible for the failed assassination of Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman Sept. 25. Israeli public television reported that Danny Yatom testified before the parliamentary subcommittee on foreign affairs on Monday that Mr. Netanyahu selected the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) official as the target. He testified that Mr. Netanyahu made the selection with help from Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Shin Bet internal security

chief Ami Ayalon, the television said. In his eight hours of testimony, Mr. Yatom also said that he had ruled out an attack on Mr. Misha'al, the head of Hamas's political office in Amman, and opted for another target on another continent out of the five choices discussed. The television also said that Mr. Yatom said he had been informed of the decision to hit Mr. Misha'al, which was made in his absence by Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Mordechai and Mr. Ayalon. Mr. Yatom said that the operation, which caused a crisis in Israel's relations with Jordan, failed partly because a veteran Mossad agent misread the situation and failed to see that it did

not allow for the attack to be carried out properly. According to private Channel 2 television Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu watched a film on the poison used by Mossad agents, before their assassination attempt against a Hamas official in Amman, Channel 2 television reported Sunday. Mr. Yatom showed the film to Mr. Netanyahu after the double suicide attack in Jerusalem on July 31 which killed 16 Israelis. The film explains the effects of the poison, some of which was injected with a syringe into Mr. Misha'al's neck.

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Restrictions on press spark protests ahead of elections

By Tanya Willmer
Agence France Presse

AMMAN — Jordan, which enjoys a reputation as one of the more tolerant Arab states, has come under fire ahead of Tuesday's election over a press clampdown branded as an attempt to muzzle opposition.

"We walk a tightrope every day," said George Hawatmeh, editor-in-chief of the Jordan Times, condemning recent changes to the press code as "totally unjustified."

Two months before the election, the third since Jordan began its democracy push in 1989, authorities suspended publication of 13 weekly papers under a law which also stiffened penalties for such crimes as treason and defamation.

"If you are talking about a fledgling democracy, you cannot impose laws every time something goes wrong — the starting point for democracy is freedom of speech," Mr. Hawatmeh told AFP.

"If you do away with that, there is very little you can do to strengthen democracy, to expose corruption and bring out all shades of opinion into the open," said Mr. Hawatmeh, also founder of a new press rights group called the Arab Media Institute.

The legislative polls take place Tuesday clouded by a boycott by the powerful Islamist opposition which accuses the government of being "anti-democratic" and widespread allegations of electoral fraud.

Jordan's 4.2 million people generally enjoy the freedom to express wide ranging opinions but the government can exercise censorship on items it finds embarrassing, unpalatable or against Jordan's interests.

"We look at Jordan and see it as a country in a leadership position in terms of openness, tolerance and press freedom, comparing it to the countries in the region," said Malcolm

Smart, deputy director of Article 19, a London-based press rights group.

But he described the new law as a "serious step backwards."

"Jordan must be a fortunate country indeed if it can dispense with so significant a portion of its mass media without feeling any sense of loss," Smart said at a seminar on press freedom in Amman last week.

The 13 mainly limited-circulation tabloids were suspended in September under a code adopted in May which gave publications three months to increase their capital — to \$450,000 from \$22,500 for weekly newspapers and to \$900,000 from \$75,000 for dailies.

The law, which triggered a wave of union protests, also increased penalties for treason, defamation and "attacks on national unity and public morale" to around \$35,000, beyond the financial means of most journalists.

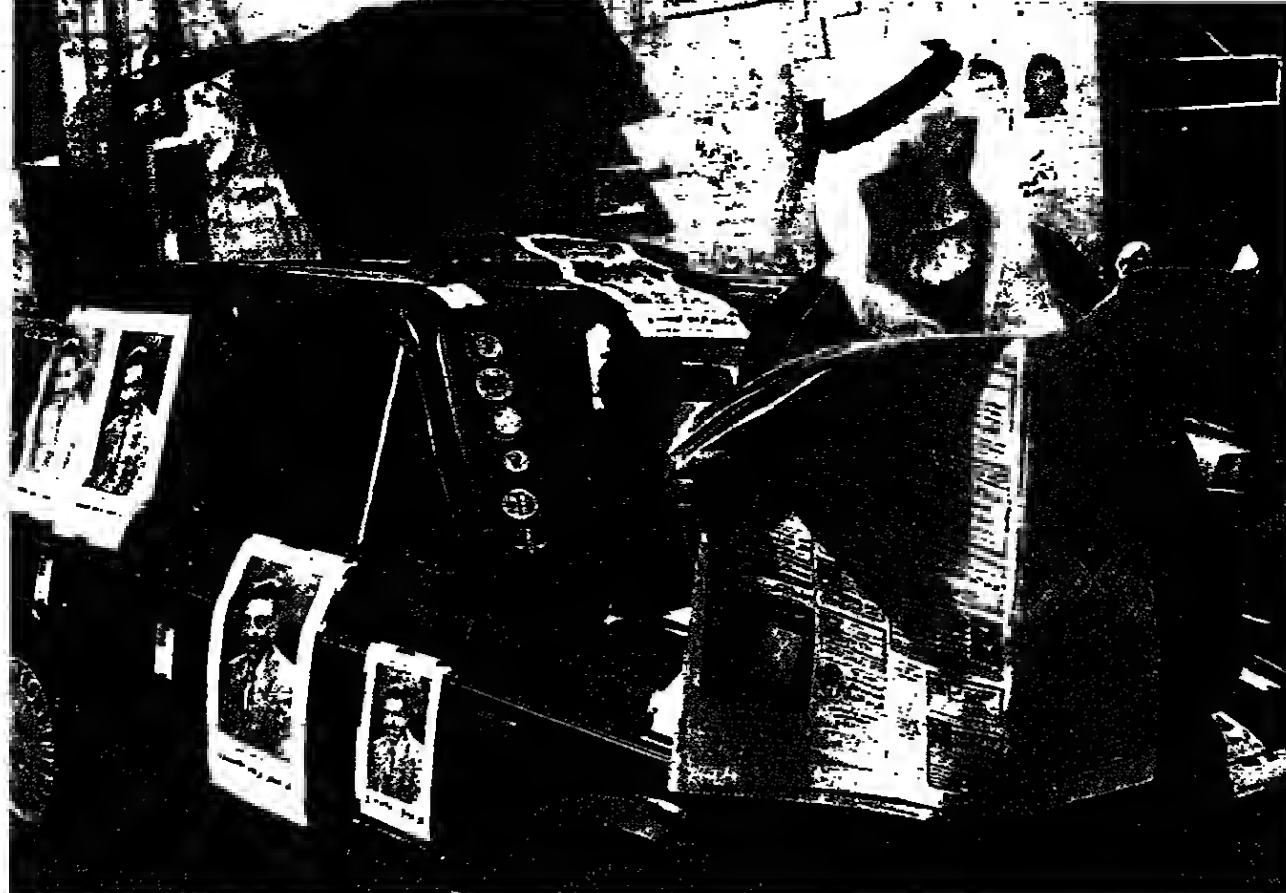
Managers of the suspended publications said the new code's objective was to silence the press while opposition was growing to normalisation of relations with Israel, which signed a peace treaty with Jordan in October 1994.

"We have to operate some self-censorship because the law stops us from publishing anything derogatory against a friendly bead of state. That also goes for the currency in Jordan, the security apparatus, you name it," said Mr. Hawatmeh.

"Yes, there were some terrible practices by some of the weeklies, they were sensationalist and crossed ethical lines. But the amendments are totally unjustified because they punish the good journalists along with the bad."

The government argues that it was necessary to sort out the many weekly publications in order to improve press standards.

"Jordan has lived in crisis throughout its history,"



An elderly man in the city of Salt reads a newspaper full of news about today's parliamentary election (AFP photo)

Reporters Sans Frontières urges government to put on hold enforcement of amended press law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Reporters Sans Frontières on Monday urged the Jordanian government to lift the suspension of several weekly newspapers, to put on hold the enforcement of amendments to the Press and Publications Law and to amend it in consultation with journalists and media professionals.

In a statement issued on the occasion of the legislative election, a copy of which was faxed to the Jordan Times, Reporters Sans Frontières also called on the government to stop prohibiting international newspapers from the Kingdom.

On Sept. 23, 1997, the government decided to suspend 13 weekly newspapers for being in breach of the amended Press and Publications Law. The weeklies are: Al Majd, Al Mithaq, Al Hadath, Sawt Al Mar'a, Al Sayyad, Al Bilad, Hadath Al Sa'ah, Al Urdun, Tareeq Al Mustaqbal.

Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani said.

"It has always been a vulnerable country, subject to much external pressure, so we can't speak of freedom of the press as if stability has

always been the norm for us," he told the media seminar.

But U.S.-based Human Rights Watch said the government action was aimed at "taming the print media and

Fares, Al Najem Al Arabi, Al Umma and Al Hadaf.

Furthermore, during recent weeks, several foreign newspapers were prohibited from entering the Kingdom.

The London-based Arabic language Al Quds Al Arabi, Asharq Al Awsat, Al Hayat and the Lebanese daily An Nahar, plus The Guardian and The Independent, have all suffered repeated confiscation by the Press and Publications Department.

According to the statement, 54 Arabic language publications and 16 foreign ones were confiscated during the past few weeks for their coverage of the September assassination attempt on a Hamas representative by Israeli Mossad agents in Amman, or of the "campaign for highly controversial parliamentary elections boycotted by the opposition, especially the Islamic fundamentalists, that are due on Nov. 4."

intimidating political critics into silence" in the run-up to the elections.

"Jordanians are growing increasingly convinced of the importance of press freedoms while the government

is sending the message that press freedoms are dangerous," said Taher Adwan, chief editor of Al Arab Al Yawm, which is on trial for publishing a news item related to national security.

Iraq, U.S. wage war of words at Arab conference

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An Iraqi official and former U.S. officials clashed here Monday over President Saddam Hussein's ban on U.S. arms inspectors, during an Arab League conference on the future of the region.

Nabil Nejm, Iraq's ambassador to the League, stood up and told an ex-commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf and two former State Department officials that Washington's sole aim was to prolong U.N. sanctions against Baghdad (see story on page 1).

"Allow me to tell you that I differ with you on what you have said," Mr. Nejm told General Joseph Hoar, former assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and a former U.S. ambassador to Abu Dhabi, William Rugh, at a press conference.

"Iraq will not accept mortgaging its fate to one country... I assure you that Iraq is now free of all the so-called weapons of mass destruction and their components," he said.

"The Americans are prolonging the problem but we affirm again that we cannot bind the Iraqi people in the absence of any prospects for lifting the sanctions."

Mr. Nejm spoke for nearly five minutes after Gen. Hoar and Mr. Murphy answered questions on whether they expected a U.S. military strike on Iraq for its ban on American members of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Baghdad.

"Allow me your excellency to say that it is not a

problem of American hatred against the Iraqi people," Mr. Murphy told Mr. Nejm, both of whom were attending a symposium on the future of the Arab World.

"Unfortunately there is no trust or confidence in the Iraqi regime when it comes to the issue of weapons of mass destruction... In the absence of this confidence, suspicions continue not only in America but around the world."

UNSCOM on Monday suspended field operations after Baghdad carried out its threat and prevented a U.S. arms inspector from taking part in a visit to a weapons site.

Gen. Hoar reiterated the official U.S. line that military action against Iraq could not be ruled out.

"But I tell you that nobody wants to see casualties again as there are still other ways at the disposal of the United Nations to bring this crisis to a conclusion," he said.

Mr. Murphy said he believed President Saddam had "miscalculated" after China, Russia and France abstained from a Security Council vote last month to impose new sanctions on Iraq if it continued to obstruct UNSCOM.

"I suspect that he saw in those abstentions signs of weakness and disagreement among U.N. members... But I believe certain arrangements could still be worked out to convince Iraq to reconsider allowing U.S. inspectors."

1,500 supporters attend Islamic Jihad rally in Hebron, vow to 'wipe out' Israel

HEBRON (AFP) — Over 1,500 supporters of the Islamic Jihad held a rally Monday in the West Bank town of Hebron, trampling on Israeli flags and vowing to "wipe out" Israel, witnesses said.

A group of masked activists marched through the rally on the grounds of Hebron University carrying a coffin marked, "The Peace Process," and sporting toy Kalashnikovs while a tape played the noise of machine gun-fire.

American and Israeli flags were placed across the steps leading to a stage, so that the speakers — mostly Jihad student leaders — could tread on them as they

headed up to the podium to address the crowd. The flags were later burned.

Banners on the walls of the courtyard read, "Our goal is to implement God's rule on earth, to free our lands, and to wipe Israel out of existence."

The rally was the latest of a series organised by Jihad across the West Bank and Gaza over the past week to mark the second anniversary of the killing of Fathi Shikaki, a Jihad leader who was assassinated by presumed Israeli agents in Malta on Oct. 26, 1995.

Islamic Jihad, smaller than Hamas, has carried out a number of deadly attacks in Israel, killing dozens of

people. Israel has demanded that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) uproot both Jihad and Hamas from its self-rule areas as a condition for progress in the peace process.

Meanwhile, around 10 Palestinian cars blocked the highway running the length of the Gaza Strip for 20 minutes in a protest near a joint Israeli-Palestinian checkpoint outside the Gush Katif bloc of settlements in southern Gaza.

The National Islamic Committee for Land Defence, which groups all Palestinian factions organised the demonstration to protest Israeli settlement

policies and Israeli security measures on the main road.

The Israeli army bars Palestinians driving alone from using the stretch of road near the Gush Katif settlements to prevent car-bomb attacks on the settlements on the presumption that potential suicide attackers will not have a second person in the car with them.

The Palestinians have held several anti-settlement demonstrations in the past weeks as the self-rule authority demands that Israel call a halt to settlement construction before going ahead with peace negotiations.

Do not forget Iraqi Kurds, U.N. says

BAGHDAD (R) — The United Nations in Baghdad urged the world community on Monday to turn some of its attention to northern Iraq, where the two main Kurdish factions have been fighting.

Iraq and the United Nations are locked in a standoff over weapons inspections. Baghdad on Monday blocked American members of a U.N. arms inspection team from entering a weapons site (see story on page 1).

Referring to the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling weapons of mass destruction, Eric Falt, spokesman for Iraq's U.N. coordinator, said:

"The justifiable attention given to UNSCOM should not detract from the difficult situation in northern Iraq where fighting and bombing

continued between rival Kurdish groups."

U.N. relief workers say the arms inspection dispute has diverted attention from northern Iraq.

They say relief supplies are not reaching large areas of Iraqi Kurdistan due to the fighting between the militias of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Massoud Barzani and those of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Mr. Falt said the number of displaced people, mostly elderly, women and children, was rising and implementation of Iraq's oil-for-food deal in the Kurdish region was being hampered in several areas.

"Despite assurances from the leaders of KDP and PUK, we now have evidence that the ranks of internally dis-

placed persons (IDPS) are growing...possibly up to 10,000 people have been displaced in the past two weeks," he said.

"This policy is akin to physical cleansing and targets more particularly the elderly, women and children," he said.

Fierce fighting broke out last month between the KDP and PUK forces. A U.S.-brokered truce has failed to silence their guns.

Diplomats in Baghdad said Jalal Talabani's PUK had made significant territorial gains in the past week. The Turkish air force has intervened several times on KDP's behalf, raiding PUK positions and targets, said one diplomat.

Turkey last month sent an estimated 15,000 troops to fight guerrillas of the Kurdish

Labour Party (PKK) in northern Iraq. Barzani joined the Turks in fighting the PKK. Mr. Talabani, whom Ankara accuses of sheltering PKK elements, refused to join in the fight.

In August last year, Baghdad sent troops to northern Iraq to recapture the Kurdish stronghold of, the region's capital, for Barzani.

The Iraqi thrust prompted the United States to launch missile attacks against air defence targets in southern Iraq.

Northern Iraq has been controlled by the two groups since a U.S.-led coalition drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in 1991.

The militias have been fighting on and off since 1994, making an overall settlement of the conflict difficult.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
15:30 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Margaret Volant
23:15 The Guilty

PRAYER TIMES

04:31 Fajr
05:50 (Sunrise) Duha
11:19 Dhuhur
14:44 Asr
16:48 Maghreb
18:07 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.

Armenian International Church
Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

ment of Meteorology

Under the effect of a relative cold air mass affecting the Kingdom, it will be relatively cold, skies cloudy with a chance of intermittent showers, and winds southerly moderate to active. In Aqaba it will be rainy, skies cloudy to partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Amman 13/18
Aqaba 18/26
Deserts 11/22
Jordan Valley 17/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 20, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 47 per cent, Aqaba 23 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddami 893542
Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080
IRBID:
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja 252970
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan 995743
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Dept 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111
637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Alkileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845

Al-Mousher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09) 983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09) 900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09) 986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09) 990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02) 275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02) 272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02) 247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)
08:15 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
17:45 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
14:40 Munich (YP)
16:30 Rome (AZ)
18:30 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:20 London (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:45 Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 Tel Aviv
(RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:15 Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:20 Larnaca (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
Other Flights
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)
15:40 Munich (YP)
15:45 Istanbul (TK)
17:30 Rome (AZ)
19:30 Dubai (EK)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 Tel Aviv (RW)
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Two-thirds of candidates believe elections will not be 'fair and free' — poll



AMMAN (J.T.) — A candidates' opinion poll conducted by Al Arab Al Yawm Arabic daily last week revealed that 88 per cent of the candidates support the idea of changing the present elections law, but only 34 per cent believe that the parliamentary elections will be fair and free.

The survey, published on the eve of the Nov. 4 general elections, covered 176 randomly-chosen candidates, or 33 per cent of the total field, according to the paper.

On questions concerning the elections law, 88 per cent of the sample favoured the introduction of a new election law, and 58 per cent do not support the idea of transforming Jordan into a single constituency.

When asked if the elec-

tions will be free and fair, 34 per cent said the elections will be fair, 49 per cent said they will not be completely fair, and 15 per cent said they were positive that the elections will not be fair.

The survey revealed that 55.1 per cent of the candidates who responded that the elections will be fair come from the south, while only 22.9 per cent from the central regions expressed this opinion.

As to whether the candidates approve of the present temporary Press and Publications Law, 82 per cent said they backed a change of the law, while 13 per cent do not support a change.

On the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, 46 per cent of the candidates said they support the treaty, 38 per cent do not support the treaty, two per cent partially support the treaty, and 14 per cent did not respond.

The survey showed that 63.3 per cent of the candidates from the southern constituencies supported the treaty, while the candidates of the northern region are largely opposed to the

treaty.

On the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, the survey showed that 82 per cent of the candidates support the idea of Jordanian-Palestinian unity, nine per cent do not approve of this unity, and seven per cent did not respond.

On political party affiliation, 85 per cent said they do not belong to a party, ten per cent said they do, and five per cent did not respond.

The survey showed that 14.3 per cent of the candidates from the southern regions belong to parties, 9.8 per cent from the north have party affiliations, and 8.1 per cent from the central districts are running under a party banner.

The paper's teams conducted the survey in person or by telephone with candidates from various constituencies between Oct. 23-30. The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with several veteran politicians and the results were processed with the help of a specialist at Yarmouk University, according to the report.

Royal Decree endorses signing of treaty banning chemical weapons

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Monday endorsing Jordan's decision to join an international treaty banning the use of chemical weapons, which was prepared by a special U.N. commission at the Hague last April.

Jordan's representative to the U.N. presented the legal department with the necessary document

containing the endorsement, raising the total number of nations that have endorsed the treaty to 165.

Along with Jordan, the following Arab states have endorsed the treaty: Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Mauritania, Djibouti, the Comoros

Islands, and Morocco.

Six Arab countries have not yet joined the treaty: Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, and Somalia.

The special U.N. commission on banning chemical weapons is scheduled to hold a conference for all signatory nations next month, according to a government statement.

Jordan's decision was within the framework of its policy to work towards the achievement of a just and durable peace in the Middle East, the statement continued.

The treaty calls for a total ban on the production and use of chemical weapons and the creation of a special mechanism for inspection of

chemical weapons.

The treaty calls for every nation to destroy all chemical weapons in their arsenals, but does not impose a ban on the production of chemical materials to be used for agricultural, industrial or pharmaceutical purposes.

Jordan signs \$112m loan for water projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development Monday initiated an agreement by which the Kingdom will receive a \$112 million loan for water projects.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Hadadin said the loan will help Jordan implement development projects in the Wadi Hassa basin and the Mujib and Wath basins, where dams will be erected.

Part of the loan will be used to bring water to the southern Jordan Valley region and the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, according to the minister.

The water authority prepared designs for this project, after conducting feasibility studies and before applying for the loan, he continued.

According to the minister, an Arab Fund team arrived in Amman from Kuwait last week and made an overall assessment of the project, which was approved by its members.

The agreement was initiated by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammari and the head of the fund's team.

According to Dr. Hadadin, the project will conserve water that can be used for industrial purposes in the Dead Sea area and for expanding irrigated lands in the southern Jordan Valley.

The government is in contact with the Yugoslav government for financing assistance in the construction of the Mujib dam as part of Yugoslavia's payment of its debts to Jordan for phosphate purchases, he stated.

TV, radio to offer full coverage of elections



AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Radio and Television Corporation Monday announced that it has made arrangements for full, live coverage of the

parliamentary elections in several districts.

Naser Judeh, the television station director, said six studios have been specially equipped to handle the incoming results and other noteworthy items during the voting process.

The main studio is at the television station, the second at the Royal Cultural Centre, and others have been installed in Irbid, Salt, Ma'an, and Aqaba.

Jordan television will begin its broadcast day at 7 a.m. and will continue

live transmission until the results of the elections have been announced, according to Mr. Judeh.

Jordan radio made a similar announcement Monday, saying that special facilities have been installed to receive reports from radio correspondents from several electoral districts.

Hashem Khreisat, the radio director, said transmission of the election process and results will be covered live on the station's frequencies from 7

a.m. until the results of the elections have been announced.

Meanwhile, it was announced Monday that the Civil Status and Passports Department and its affiliated branches around the country will remain open Tuesday in order to issue identification documents for voters, if needed.

Each voter must produce identification to have the right to cast a ballot in the elections.

Centre estimates less than half of registered voters will turn out



AMMAN (J.T.) — In an announcement before today's elections, Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre Monday estimated

that 857,500 citizens will cast their votes.

The figure represents 58 per cent of the total number of eligible voters who obtained their voter cards and 46.6 per cent of the total number of registered voters.

The centre said these figures are similar to those of the 1989 and 1993 general elections. The statement added that the winners will receive between 2,000 and 6,000 votes,

depending on the number of seats, candidates, and participating voters in each district.

The number of women candidates running in the elections represents six times the number of women who ran for election in the 1993 and 1989 campaigns, according to the centre, which predicted that three women are expected to win places in the 80-seat Parliament.

Al Urdun Al Jadid,

which since 1989 has been holding seminars and other election-related activities, said the total number of citizens expected to take part in the elections in the Amman district is 225,000, in the Irbid district 180,000, Zarqa 90,000, Tafilah 20,000, Balqa 85,000, Karak 65,000, Ma'an 17,500, Mafraq 25,000, Madaba 30,000, Jerash 30,000, Ajloun 35,000, and Aqaba 7,500.

Opposition groups urge government to oppose aggression against Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Higher Committee for Coordination Among the Opposition Parties Monday issued a statement urging the government to take a clear stand against the imminent aggression against Iraq and not to allow Jordanian territory to be used as a platform for any hostile acts directed against Syria or Iraq.

The statement, issued in the wake of the latest U.S. threats against Iraq, also called on the Arab masses and Arab political forces to declare their support for Iraq and stand against the U.S.-Zionist threats directed against the Arab country.

The latest escalation in the situation resulted from Iraq's decision to

remove American members of the U.N. team of experts examining Iraq's potential for weapons of mass destruction.

Reports from Washington have said the U.S. has not ruled out military action against Iraq if it did not drop its ban on American inspectors.

"The committee has been following with deep concern the latest developments regarding the sanctions imposed by the U.S. via the U.N. Council, which have been affecting Iraq for the past seven years. The recent dangerous escalation in the situation was represented by attempts to perpetuate the sanctions," the statement said.

"The latest develop-

ments and the American threats are designed to throw the whole region into a new conflict, with the new Turkish-Zionist-American alliance committing acts of aggression against Iraq within the framework of evil colonial plots that are designed to subjugate the whole Arab region to Turkish-Zionist-American domination and to seize the Arab oil wealth," the statement continued.

The document said the new aggression is designed to help the alliance achieve the Zionists' ambitions in the Arab region and continue their occupation of the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

"The looming dangers

require the Arab governments, especially Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, to stand firm in the face of the Turkish-Zionist-American conspiracies, pool their efforts to revive Arab joint action, and lift the sanctions on Iraq," according to the statement.

The statement urged Iraq and Syria to take steps towards unifying their positions in the light of the threats of war posed to the Arab Nation and called on Iraq and Iran to take a joint stand against the U.S., "the largest evil force in history."

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "First Knight" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of wicker accessories from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at the Jordan Rivers Design show-room (Tel. 613081), until Nov. 23.

* Works by Su'ad Ibrahim entitled "The Soul Rest" at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 553098), until Nov. 11.

* Paintings by Patrice Cadennec at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 26.

* Graphics exhibition by Abdul Wahab Abdul Mohsen at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 5.

* Works by Bahraini artist Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 15. Also displaying a new collection of works by contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).



PRO-PEACE CANDIDATE: Tareq Hameedi, one of the few candidates in the elections who is waging his election campaign on a platform of peace with Israel, Monday sits on his car during his campaign. The banner in the shape of a pigeon reads 'I am the candidate of peace' (Reuters photo)

Attackers beat up agent of blind candidate



AMMAN (AFP) — The campaign director for a blind candidate was recovering in a hospital Monday after being beaten up in Amman.

Khaled Amin Saif was attacked by "three unknown men who beat him and broke an asphalt over his head," the candidate, Majed Majali, told AFP.

Majali, 31, a blind poet standing in the Karak region, said he did not rule out the

possibility that the attack was organised by rival candidates.

"They warned him not to continue working on my election campaign," Mr. Majali said.

Last month, lawyer Wisaf Ka'abneh, one of 17 female election candidates, said unidentified gunmen opened fire on her rental car near Amman, shooting her driver in the leg.

Ms. Ka'abneh, running in the Central Bedouin constituency, said the attack came a week after supporters of a rival candidate smashed up her own car.



LAST MINUTE CAMPAIGNING: Ajaiyah Dawabeik Monday makes a V-sign during her tour of Amman. Ms. Dawabeik is one of 17 women standing against 525 men for a seat in Parliament (Reuters photo)

JORDAN TIMES FAX 696-183

Jiang heads home with U.S. ties, and leadership, enhanced

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin is due home Tuesday after a high-profile U.S. trip which put U.S.-Sino ties on a new footing and attracted \$4 billion in contracts with U.S. firms.

The first visit to the United States by a Chinese head of state since 1985, the trip was aimed at "enhancing mutual understanding, broadening common ground, developing cooperation and building a future together," Mr. Jiang said Sunday in Los Angeles, the last leg of his eight-day tour.

Diplomats here said his meticulously-prepared visit had given Mr. Jiang what he set out to achieve — international recognition which will boost his standing at home in the Chinese leadership.

"It seems that he has managed to reestablish links with the world's leading power without making any major concessions," one European diplomat said.

The visit helped to rebuild relations soured by

Beijing's crushing of pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in June 1989, an event which figured large on Mr. Jiang's U.S. tour. The visit was hailed as a "success" by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen following the landmark summit between Mr. Jiang and U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House Wednesday.

The two leaders decided to establish a "constructive strategic relationship," marked by the setting up of a hotline between them.

They agreed to differ over human rights and Taiwan, which they said should not come in the way of the development of the two countries' growing business partnership.

And in a landmark move, Mr. Clinton agreed to end a ban on the sale of U.S. atomic technology to China, after Beijing assured him it would not help Iran develop nuclear weapons.

This agreement will benefit Beijing's drive to feed the vast energy needs of Chinese industry while giving

U.S. firms access to a market currently dominated by French, Russian and Canadian companies. U.S. companies signed contracts worth \$4.26 billion with China during Mr. Jiang's visit, deals which should help redress a U.S. trade deficit with China which stood at \$44 billion last year, according to U.S. figures.

Boeing inked a deal worth \$3 billion to build 50 planes for China, whose aviation market has recently become dominated by Boeing's European rival Airbus.

But no progress was made over opening up China's domestic markets to foreign competition, although Beijing did recently announce a cut in import tariffs on various goods to 17 per cent from 23 per cent.

The Chinese media ignored completely the vocal protests over human rights, Tibet and Taiwan which dogged every stage of Mr. Jiang's tour, concentrating instead on the visit's ceremonial aspects and

official talks.

Mr. Jiang himself paid little regard to the demonstrations, but he was forced to admit at Harvard University late Saturday that despite his 71 years he could hear the shouts of protesters outside. It was at Harvard that the only real surprise of the visit occurred, when Mr. Jiang admitted for the first time that "mistakes" may have been made at Tiananmen Square.

His comments sparked hopes of a revision of the official Chinese verdict that the protesters were "counter-revolutionaries" bent on overthrowing the state.

"It goes without saying that naturally we may have shortcomings and even make some mistakes," Mr. Jiang said in response to a question on Beijing's use of tanks and troops to put down the peaceful protests. "However, we are still working to further improve our work," he said. Mr. Jiang was expected back in Beijing in mid-afternoon.

Leading Chinese dissident to go into self-exile

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Leading Chinese dissident Bao Ge, who has suffered persistent police harassment since his release from a labour camp in June, has decided to leave China, his mother said Monday.

Mr. Bao — the most active of the few dissidents still at large in China — had "just decided" to seek residence overseas, preferably in the United States, Wang Yufang told AFP. She added that the 33-year-old dissident was in the process of applying for an exit visa with the police.

Mr. Bao's decision came ahead of Chinese President Jiang Zemin's return to China Tuesday from an eight-day landmark visit to the United States, where he was continually dogged by protests over human rights.

Saturday, Mr. Jiang raised hopes of an official review of the military's 1989 suppression of pro-democracy student protesters in Tiananmen Square when he admitted for the first time that "mistakes" may have been made.

"It goes without saying that naturally we may have shortcomings and even made some mistakes," Mr. Jiang said in response to a question on Beijing's crack-

down on the peaceful protests, after a speech at Harvard University.

However, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told reporters in Los Angeles Monday there had been no change in Beijing's position on the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Mr. Jiang rejected calls made by human rights activists and Chinese dissidents prior to his U.S. tour for the freeing of political prisoners, calling them criminals who had broken China's laws.

Bao Ge was one of several dissidents who wrote a series of open letters to the central government in the run-up to Mr. Jiang's visit last week.

He demanded that political prisoners be freed, that China sign a United Nations convention on civil and political rights and that the country launch democratic reforms. He has also sought government recognition for an underground group, Voice of Human Rights, and a national association to seek war reparations from Japan.

In late September, the dissident said Shanghai police had hinted it would be best if he left the country. "The police told me that the pro-

cedures for going abroad had become very simple now, which means they will not give me any trouble were I to go abroad," he said.

Mr. Bao has complained of being unable to make a living and said that nearly everyone connected to him has suffered from police harassment over the last five months. His mother complained in an open letter to Mr. Jiang during the five-year Communist Party congress in September that continual police pressure had driven her family to the brink of destitution.

The activist was denied papers required to find work well beyond a three-month deadline for their return, and his sister, Bao Ying, lost her job following an arbitrary detention by police. Several Chinese dissidents, including Tiananmen student protest leaders Chai Ling and Wu Wei Kaixi, now live in exile abroad.

Mr. Bao was sentenced without trial to three years in a labour camp in September 1993 after his arrest three months earlier for conducting a sit-in protest for the release of fellow Shanghai dissident Zhang Xianliang.

Huge wave sweeps away Manihiki village and more than 20 people

RAROTONGA (AFP) — Three people including a baby are known to have died and 20 are missing after a huge wave whipped up by cyclone Martin swept them away from their tiny village on the remote Pacific atoll of Manihiki, the Cook Islands government said Sunday.

Fourteen seriously injured people arrived here Sunday night from the atoll on an emergency flight and the prime minister's office said more would be brought by a New Zealand Air Force Hercules Monday.

"Disaster. Everything has been wiped out," said one of the injured, Tarita Williams, at the airport.

A wide-eyed 13-year-old, Aporo Koteka, was at home when waves smashed a concrete block wall onto his legs. He said there were no houses still standing on the atoll.

The cyclone hit the island Saturday and a statement from the prime minister's office split out the scale of the disaster.

Most of the missing, who include a baby, are from a few families in the village of Tahumu on Manihiki. The

statement said only half a dozen buildings were still standing there and some of those, like the new church, were considered unsafe.

"A huge wave demolished the Telecom building and washed the rest of the missing people away..."

In the village of Tukao all houses were destroyed apart from a few near the airport. But the people of that village were being housed there and all were accounted for, the statement said.

Survivors needed clothing, shelter, cooking utensils and carpentry tools and the power station for both villages had been destroyed.

The statement said tarpaulins would be flown in. "They also need fishing nets because there are no more nets on the island and fish is likely to become a particularly important food source over the coming days," the statement said.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon said one of the dead was an American but one appears on the list from the prime minister's office.

For Manihiki, a low-lying 140 hectare atoll, Martin

was the worst possible nightmare. The once warm blue Pacific, heated by the El Niño effect, was whipped into a frenzy of four metre waves which destroyed everything and swept people away.

A man and a boy were seen trying to tie themselves to drums as the waves overwhelmed them. They have not been seen since.

"The place has been flattened," Air Rarotonga Managing Director Ewan Smith told AFP. "There's no trees, nothing."

Glennice Lyons, one of the hundreds of Manihiki islanders living in Rarotonga, told of her helpless agony as she spoke to store-owner Julia Williams over the phone line as Martin bore down.

Ms. Williams started screaming when a wave tore through the house. Ms. Lyons said she told Ms. Williams to turn off the power. With the phone receiver left on a table, Ms. Lyons says all she could hear was the sound of furniture smashing around and waves coming through the house.

Taiwan carefully examines Sino-U.S. joint statement

TAIPEI (AFP) — The Taiwanese government is examining "carefully" the joint statement Washington signed with Beijing last week amid concerns the nationalist island could be left in the cold by warming Sino-U.S. ties.

"Although we already have an overall picture of the summit (between Presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton), we still have to examine it from a strict standard," Foreign Minister Jason Hu said Monday.

"We've to look beyond the contents of the statement," Mr. Hu said after a 30-minute meeting with Richard Bush, chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan, a de facto diplomatic mission.

Mr. Hu declined to reveal the contents of his meeting with Mr. Bush, whose organisation handles exchanges with Taiwan in the absence of official links.

But the foreign minister commented: "Maybe Americans have somewhat failed to understand our feeling (about the summit). We should let them understand."

Mr. Bush sought to reassure Taipei upon his arrival here Sunday and reading a brief statement in Chinese: "I want to reassure you all that the U.S. has not changed its Taiwan policy."

He said Taiwan's relations with the U.S. were protected by the Taiwan Relations Act, which has been in place since Washington switched diplomatic recognition of China from Taipei to Beijing in 1979.

The Clinton-Jiang summit has sparked deep fears here that Taiwan could be undermined as Washington steps up efforts to promote ties with Beijing.

Mr. Hu told parliament last week the expansion of Sino-U.S. ties "would certainly have an impact on Taiwan and hurt Taiwan's interests."

But Jeff Bader, the head of Asian affairs on Mr. Clinton's National Security Council, said last week: "We do not intend to improve relations with the PRC (People's Republic of China) at the expense of Taiwan."



Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's (FYROM) President Kiro Gligorov (center below) stands between Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis (left below) and Turkish Premier Mesut Yilmaz (right below) while Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos laughs (top second left) next to Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic, (top left) Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Severin (top second right) and the FYROM's Foreign Minister Blagoj Hadziski (top right) during a family photo session at the two-day southeastern European countries summit (Reuters photo)

Balkan summit calls for cooperation

AGIA PELAGIA, Greece (R) — Balkan leaders began a two-day summit on the Greek island of Crete Monday to try to forge closer economic ties in a region known for political turbulence.

Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia were expected to set up procedures for regular meetings at ministerial and summit level and to pledge to work for peace and prosperity.

Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis opened the summit with a call for the leaders to work for a new Balkans.

"We all have a past, but we must overcome it... in order to define our future together," he said.

A series of planned bilateral meetings between attendees with long-standing differences underlined the difficulties of achieving such a task.

Mr. Simitis was due to

meet his Turkish counterpart Mesut Yilmaz towards the end of the summit's first day amid increasing tensions between the two sides over Cyprus and sovereignty in the Aegean.

It was the first visit to Greece by a Turkish prime minister since 1988.

Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano was also due to meet Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to discuss Kosovo, where ethnic Albanian dissatisfaction with Belgrade threatens to erupt.

Diplomats said it was not clear whether Tirana and Belgrade would be able to agree a joint statement at the meeting.

Greek officials have been working hard to play down expectations of progress from the bilateral talks, emphasising that the summit has been called to develop Balkan-wide cooperation.

In particular, both Greece and Turkey have said they do not expect any new

breakthrough from the Yilmaz-Simitis meeting.

Both countries have spent the past few weeks accusing each other of aggressive behaviour in the eastern Mediterranean.

Athens said Turkish fighters repeatedly violated its airspace during a joint Greece-Cyprus military exercise and also twice buzzed a military transport plane carrying Greek Defence Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos. Warships also were involved in a near collision.

Despite the official line that not much would come from the meeting, however, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said his country was ready to discuss disputes with Athens, including through international arbitration.

"We are ready to solve all problems within the framework of the U.N. Charter's means for solving problems, that is negotiation, third parties, arbitration," he told reporters.

Swedish registers kept on Jews during WWII — radio

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Nazi organisations in Sweden registered the names of more than 20,000 Jews from the late 1930s until the 1950s, possibly in preparation of a deportation of Jews from the country, Swedish Radio said Monday.

The registers were secretly drawn up, and included information on Jews, their relatives, their assets and places of employment.

Sweden was officially neutral during World War II.

"If Germany had entered Sweden, the groundwork would have been laid for deportation from Sweden to the death camps. And it would not have been very hard to find collaborators,"

Stephan Bruchfeld, a Swedish fascism researcher at Stockholm University, told Swedish Radio.

"The registers existed and all that would have been necessary was a functional police apparatus to carry things out," he said.

In one of the registers, now stored at the Swedish Labour Movement's archives, Jews are listed by profession: Jewish doctors, Jewish dentists, Jewish military and so on, the radio said.

Other registers list Jews geographically. Yet another register, kept by the Sveaborg organisation, contains detailed information on 5,000-6,000 Jews and people who are half or quarter Jewish. The organisation's register was found hidden in a wall in a building in northern Sweden during renovations.

Over the past year, Sweden has begun to examine its wartime history as its neutrality has been called into question by researchers and historians.

The country has been harshly criticised for its dealings with Nazi Germany during the war, delivering railway tracks and ball bearings and receiving payment for the deliveries in gold.

Two commissions, established by the Foreign Ministry and the Central Bank, have been appointed in the past year to look into lost Jewish wealth in Sweden and Nazi gold.

\$1b U.N. pledge said to be hoax

MELBOURNE (R) — A self-styled "Asian prince" who persuaded the United Nations he was giving it \$1 billion for the poor was discovered Monday to be a failed Australian tradesman with delusions of grandeur.

Describing himself as an exiled Borneo prince and wearing a white robe and tricolour sash, the man got a standing ovation at a U.N. conference in Melbourne Friday by declaring he would donate \$1 billion to U.N. programmes.

The pledge rivalled a recent billion dollar pledge to the United Nations from U.S. cable-television king Ted Turner, but the only people who said they knew "his royal highness Prince Hadji Mohd Al Alsagoff van Eldik" were his family in Queensland.

"I don't know where he got the prince part from, but if he's got this sort of money he will help the poor, that's the sort of guy he is," sister Anna van

Eldik told reporters in Mackay, in Australia's tropical north.

Known simply as Bep van Eldik by his family, he still owes them Australian dollars 10,000 (\$7,000), his brother said.

"If he's that bloody rich he can send us some money," brother John van Eldik told the Australian newspaper.

Bep van Eldik, described by family members as a failed builder, went overseas 19 years ago, leaving behind his wife and their seven children, the national newspaper quoted his family as saying.

Van Eldik could not be contacted Monday.

His billion dollar offer made him a hero Friday at the U.N. conference on secure infrastructures for electronic commerce, hosted by a U.N. agency which aims to help plug poor nations into a global online trading network.

U.N. Trade Point Development Centre chief Carlos Moreira, who stood

at van Eldik's side when he made his announcement, said Monday the money was pledged to U.S.-based Gift Foundation.

The foundation in turn would use the funds to carry out the centre's programmes, Mr. Moreira said.

"My understanding is the pledge was to build secure hubs in developing countries to interconnect them," he told Reuters.

Officials with the U.N. conference on trade and development, which helps administer the trade point programme, were investigating van Eldik's credentials, Mr. Moreira said.

"If it's not true, it will be embarrassing, especially for the Gift Foundation," he said. It could take weeks to answer "this \$1 billion question," he added.

Van Eldik was also reported to have said he was an heir to the sultanate of Sulu in former north Borneo, now Malaysian Sabah.

Britons campaign for clemency for nanny jailed in the U.S.

LONDON (AFP) — Tens of thousands of Britons were campaigning Monday for clemency for British nanny Louise Woodward, jailed for life in the United States for the murder of a baby in her care.

The Mirror newspaper, which said 36,647 readers had phoned in to support the nanny, printed the White House phone number on its front page and urged people to call President Bill Clinton to "demand he intercedes to ensure justice."

The mass-circulation Sun said over 32,000 had phoned its "You the jury hotline" to say they thought the au pair was innocent, while only 2,000 believed she had killed baby Matthew Eappen.

Thousands of people have meanwhile been flocking to Ms. Woodward's home village of Eltop in northwest England since she was convicted in Boston last Friday of second degree murder after a trial which was televised live and riveted the public on both sides of the Atlantic.

Residents and visitors congregated on the village green holding placards protesting the innocence of the 19-year-old au pair, and calling for Judge Hiller Zobel to either acquit Ms. Woodward or replace her conviction with one of manslaughter.

Mr. Zobel has the power to overturn the jury's verdict Tuesday after he hears emergency motions from the defence, but this is deemed extremely unlikely. It is however possible that he will replace the conviction. Murder charges indicate an intention to kill while manslaughter charges imply recklessness and carry the lesser sentence of a maximum of 20 years in prison. "Judge Zobel, correct this injustice," begged one placard in Elton, where a candlelit vigil is due to be held Monday evening. "Free Louise, she is innocent," proclaimed another.

Doreen Davies travelled from Manchester with her family to support the Louise Woodward Campaign for Justice.

"I believe she is innocent," she said. "It could be anybody's daughter. When I heard the verdict I was disgusted."

The campaign has so far received pledges of 250,000 pounds (\$400,000), which will go towards Ms. Woodward's legal costs and to pay for her parents' stay in the United States.

Campaign organiser Hazel Mayamba-Kasongo said that there were "thousands and thousands of people all over the world who are getting in touch to say they support us and hundreds forming their own support groups." Hundreds of people have rung the U.S. embassy in London to complain about the treatment of the British au pair, staff said Monday.

And a group of 25 people demanding Ms. Woodward's release awaited U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton when she arrived late Sunday at the U.S. embassy here at the end of a trip to Britain and Ireland.

The Woodward campaign has already surpassed a recent one in support of two British nurses convicted of murdering an Australian colleague in Saudi Arabia.

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Britons campaign for clemency for nanny jailed in the U.S.

Former Indian PM to go on trial in vote-buying scandal

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Former Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who was voted out last year after a five-year reign, is to go on trial here Tuesday.

A special court is scheduled to begin hearings in the case against Mr. Rao and 19 other accomplices, including former cabinet ministers and businessmen. Mr. Rao, who was formally charged with corruption and criminal conspiracy on Sept. 25, is accused of bribing opposition members of parliament to save his minority Congress party government during a crucial parliamentary vote of confidence on July 28, 1993.

The bribes were allegedly paid to four members of a regional tribal party and seven others from an opposition group to side with the government during the vote. The government survived by 14 votes.

One of the opposition members has admitted receiving bribe money. Mr. Rao also faces charges in another corruption scandal. He quit as the Congress chief in September 1996 due to pressure from colleagues.

The former prime minister had earlier sought constitutional immunity from the scandal, but a court ruled that members of parliament were "public servants" and liable for criminal prosecution.

Mr. Rao, a member of parliament, has been sidelined by the present Congress leadership.

The others named in the scandal include former cabinet ministers Satish Sharma, Buta Singh, Ajit Singh and Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav.

Deadly typhoon edges towards Asia

HONG KONG (AFP) — A "super-typhoon" packing winds of 200 kilometres per hour edged towards Southeast Asia Monday, with experts warning of massive destruction with landslides and flooding if it makes landfall.

Super-typhoon Keith was some 2,000 kilometres east of the Philippines and moving slowly towards the main island of Luzon, weather officials in Hong Kong and Manila said.

If it continued its present course and speed, Keith was expected to make landfall in Luzon late Wednesday, they added.

The "very strong" typhoon would cause widespread damage if it hit a populated area, warned Chinese University of Hong Kong geography specialist Cheng Shouquan.

"With such a windspeed at the centre, houses will be swept away not just by strong winds, but also by landslides and flooding," he said.

"People as a result will be killed. The damage will be very high."

He said a 1991 typhoon believed to have claimed 140,000 lives in Bangladesh had a windspeed of less than 110 kilometres per hour.



Long time opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung (left) raises his arms with Kim Jong-Pil as he is officially named presidential candidate of the main opposition parties, the National Congress for New Politics, in Seoul (Reuters photo)

Tough road ahead for Japan-Russia ties in 2000

TOKYO (AFP) — Despite a vow at a weekend summit in Siberia, Japan and Russia will have a tough time meeting a pledge to settle a territorial row and sign a peace treaty by 2000, experts said Monday.

Nonetheless, the pledge by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Russia's President Boris Yeltsin in Krasnoyarsk will help the two countries boost economic ties as they try to warm up relations to meet the goal, they said.

"The return of the four Japanese-claimed islands will be almost impossible because such a move will trigger fierce protests from right-wingers (in Russia)," said Hiromi Teratani, a Tokyo-based professor specialising in Russian affairs.

"President Yeltsin's term ends in 2000. It is most likely that he will leave office saying that he has made efforts but that it was difficult to meet the goal because of opposition within the country," Mr. Teratani said.

Soviet troops occupied four of the Kuril Islands off the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido towards the end of World War II.

The row has blocked the two countries from signing a peace treaty ever since 1945, meaning that a state of war between the two countries has not officially ended.

Mr. Teratani however said the summit pledge was still a diplomatic victory for both leaders who face respective economic problems at home.

"While the two countries negotiate on the territorial row and a peace treaty, they will be able to develop bilateral economic cooperation, such as a natural gas project in Siberia," he said. "They will be able to make a substantial progress by 2000."

Shigeaki Hakamada, who teaches modern Russian affairs at a Tokyo university, told Japanese dailies the Hashimoto-Yeltsin agreement was "a turning point in the history of the post-war Japan-Russia relations."

But Mr. Hakamada cautioned against "premature" judgements that it would mean the return of the islands to Japan. "How the Russian side really think about the settlement of the territorial issue is still unclear," he said.

Following Mr. Yeltsin's promise, "it is inevitable that the Communist Party and the nationalists of Russia will start shouting that he is trying to betray the country over the territorial issue," he said.

Mr. Hakamada said Mr. Yeltsin showed a "better-than-expected response" to Mr. Hashimoto's call for a progress because Japan's investment and economic cooperation was "essential" for the development of Russian Far East.

Russian officials have also hinted that the country was not ready to give up the islands.

Asked whom the islands would belong to after 2000,

Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov said in Krasnoyarsk: "In Russia there is a constitution and there is an Article Four that talks of Russia's territorial integrity. The president is the guarantor of the constitution."

However, Japanese dailies hailed the Hashimoto-Yeltsin pledge, while warning that a real breakthrough depended on whether Moscow would live up to the promise.

"Sunday's agreement signifies a new phase in bilateral relations," the mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun said in an editorial. "The Japan-Russia relationship has entered a new stage."

But the paper warned that it would be "rash to expect too much from the Hashimoto-Yeltsin agreement" as Mr. Yeltsin never agreed to return the territory to Japan.

"Was the weekend summit a real success? The answer will hinge on what both nations are willing and able to do to resolve bilateral problems," the Yomiuri said.

The Asahi Shimbun, another major daily, said the achievement the two leaders reached was "beyond our expectations."

"We have a meaningful chance to reach a breakthrough," the daily said, noting Mr. Yeltsin did what Moscow had always disliked — setting a deadline for the peace treaty's signing.

Space walk a success despite cosmonaut's faulty space suit

MOSCOW (AFP) — Mir commander Anatoly Soloviyev successfully completed a gruelling six-hour space walk Monday to remove an obsolete solar panel, despite a defect in his space suit's safety system.

Mr. Soloviyev and flight engineer Pavel Vinogradov reentered the space station at 0937 GMT, confirmed Mission control spokeswoman Ruzina Amosova.

The pair successfully completed missions to remove the solar panel and to attach a new cover on the air purification system outlet which expels carbon-dioxide extracted from Mir's atmosphere.

The walk got under way two hours behind schedule after the problem with Mr. Soloviyev's space suit was detected only moments before the two men ventured into space.

The malfunctioning telemetry unit transmits data on air pressure, temperature, and oxygen levels inside the bulky suit, as well as on vital signs to mission control at Korolyov, just north of Moscow.

The device enables flight controllers to monitor the cosmonaut's condition while he concentrates on his tasks, and warns of technical problems inside the suit, said Yuri Antoshechkin, director of sta-

tical analysis at mission control.

For more than an hour the cosmonauts tried unsuccessfully to resolve the problem by replacing the unit, but mission control ordered the spacewalk to go ahead even though the problem persisted.

That meant Mr. Soloviyev had to report his condition to mission control every few minutes after the space walk began around 0330 GMT.

Flight control chief Vladimir Soloviyev later said the device was transmitting some data: "It's not pleasant, but it's not dangerous," ITAR-TASS quoted him as saying.

His deputy Igor Goncharov said the flight director had insisted the spacewalk continue despite the malfunction because even in the event of a critical problem mission control would not be able to save him.

Despite the delay, a spokesman for mission control said the schedule of the space walk "would be carried out in its entirety."

At the start of the walk, the cosmonauts launched by hand a working replica of Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite, which the Soviet Union put into orbit on Oct. 4, 1957.

Ms. Amosova said the two cosmonauts dismantled the solar panel on Mir's Kvant module which has not worked in years, and moved it to the main station's main bloc.

They also gathered experimental material from outside Mir and will analyse it over the next few days.

A sample of the dismantled solar panel will be sent back to Earth on the U.S. Atlantis craft for investigation on the effects of the atmosphere on such materials.

Russian space officials said the space walk would have been cancelled if the problem had been connected with a flaw in the main computer — replaced early October after crashing four times in as many weeks — aboard the accident-prone space station.

Computer problems occurred during two other Mir-crew space walks, in September 1992 and May 1995.

On Oct. 23, two cosmonauts reconnected a pair of damaged solar panels, bringing Mir 15 per cent to 30 per cent more electricity.

Four panels were knocked out of action on June 25 when an out-of-control cargo vessel rammed into the ageing space station's Spektr module, punching a hole in its hull and knocking out up to half the station's electricity.

South Korean opposition signs 'single candidate' pact

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's two main opposition parties Monday publicly sealed a pact which raised their hopes of sweeping former dissident Kim Dae-Jung into the presidential Blue House in December.

"We hereby declare that Kim Dae-Jung will run in the presidential election as the sole opposition candidate," the two said to a storm of cheers from their followers in a parliamentary hall in Seoul.

Seen six months ago as unthinkable, the marriage of Kim's liberal National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) and the smaller conservative United Liberal Democrats (ULD) led by Kim Jong-Pil, was greeted with jeers by rival presidential candidates.

"It proves how power-hungry they are," scoffed ruling New Korea Party (NKP) candidate, former Supreme Court Judge Lee Hoi-Chang, referring to the widely different backgrounds of the two veter-

ans politicians. "The two Kims are only following the outdated political practice of conspiracy and opportunism," said ruling party break-away Rhee In-Je, 48, the country's youngest presidential candidate, billed as Mr. Kim's strongest rival.

ULD head Kim Jong-Pil, who under the pact has agreed to bow out of the presidential race, is a former leader of the Korean CIA and joined, then quit, incumbent president Kim Young-Sam's government when it was formed in 1993.

In contrast, Kim Dae-Jung, 73, spent years in jail under former military backed governments charged with conspiracy and leftist leanings. He went into exile in the United States in the 1980s.

It is the fourth, and his followers say the last, bid for the presidency by the NCNP leader, who walks with a limp, the legacy of a car accident believed to have been engineered by

the KCIA to get him out of the way.

Monday the two opposition Kims, their hands linked high and matching white flowers in their lapels, hailed their pact as "an unprecedented alliance of liberals and conservatives."

"We opened a new chapter in our political history," said Kim Dae-Jung, adding the alliance would put an end to "the era of (regional) power monopoly."

He vowed to campaign on a platform of introducing a German-style parliamentary system to replace South Korea's current U.S.-style presidential system which leaves the prime minister virtually powerless.

The fine print of the ULD-NCNP deal involves the ULD leader becoming prime minister with the right to appoint half of the cabinet. According to opinion polls, Kim Dae-Jung's main opponent is now Rhee In-Je, whose

chances have been bolstered by a steady stream of ruling party defectors over the past week.

Mr. Rhee is favoured by a large section of the electorate weary of the domination of South Korean politics by "the Three Kims" — the two opposition Kims, and President Kim Young-Sam, who is barred by the constitution from running for a second term.

A former protégé of the president's, whose ruling party he quit in a huff in July after failing to win the party endorsement as its presidential candidate, Mr. Rhee has gained popularity with a platform of "new politics for a new century," challenging voters to choose youth over age.

Observers noted that Kim Dae-Jung moulded the opposition alliance to appease conservatives who have vetoed him in the past as a leftist, charges he now openly challenges his political foes to revive.

Australians urged to confront bitter past

SYDNEY (AFP) — Governor-General Sir William Deane urged Australians Monday not to ignore the plight of so-called "stolen generations" of Aboriginal children forcibly separated from their families.

Mr. Deane said non-indigenous Australians had to confront the terrible stories of what happened under the forced assimilation policies of previous governments.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry into the "stolen generation" called for a national apology for the former policies and for compensation for the victims.

Many other national organisations including state governments have formally apologised, but Prime Minister John Howard has been widely criticised over his failure to do so on behalf of his conservative government.

Mr. Howard has also ruled out compensation for the surviving Aboriginal victims of what was government policy of separating the children from their parents, supposedly for their own welfare, for almost a century until the late 1960s.

Mr. Deane told an Aboriginal exhibition launch here that Australians had to accept that terrible things were done in the past.

"The rest of us have had to accept that in the name of, or with the support of governments, terrible things were done in the mistaken belief that it was for the children's good," he added.

"Or because it was quite wrongly believed that the Aboriginal people of Australia had no future and would disappear."

Those views were now rejected by all decent Australians but could not simply be dismissed as of no relevance, he said.

"Nor can the awful things done in pursuance be ignored or denied," he said.

"For we still live with their direct and indirect effects and consequences if their existence as a shameful aspect of our history, or those effects and consequences are ignored or denied or are made to haunt us as a source of bitterness and a major obstacle on the path of true reconciliation."

Australian police probe paedophile suicide pact deaths

SYDNEY (AFP) — Investigations were under way into a new Australian paedophile ring of youth workers Monday following an apparent suicide pact by three men, officials said.

Two bodies were found in a car parked in isolated bush country while a third man was fighting for his life.

Police sources confirmed reports the three had been targeted by a child protection agency recently set up by the New South Wales government in response to evidence to a royal commission investigating child sex abuse.

But State Premier Bob Carr described the allegations that paedophiles had preyed on children under state care in New South Wales as "appalling," saying they would be fully investigated — by another government inquiry if necessary.

"There's every case for concerted police action, if there's a need for a further inquiry then there'll be a further inquiry," he said.

"What's come out is appalling."

The three men, all from the New South Wales country town of Armidale north of here, were found in a parked car Sunday hundreds of kilometres away in bushland north of Brisbane in Queensland.

Two were dead and the third was helicoptered to hospital where he remained

critical Monday. Police refused to identify them until post mortems were completed and relatives informed.

The deaths were the latest of a string of suicides by men, some of them prominent figures, under investigation over allegations of child sex abuse or summoned to give evidence before the royal commission under Judge James Wood.

Mr. Wood, who delivered his final report in August, found that generations of children had suffered "enormous harm" as police and authorities had turned a blind eye to sex abuse. Clergymen, church officials, teachers and child welfare officials were among the worst abusers.

His report, which made 140 recommendations for legal and procedural changes aimed at giving children greater protection, slammed years of neglect and under-funding of child protection services.

"The latest deaths involved a 33-year-old youth worker charged last week with aggravated indecent assault after an incident in July involving a teenage boy, and a 26-year-old man sought for questioning over a similar incident."

The survivor was a 34-year-old health department employee facing six charges of homosexual intercourse with a child aged between 10 and 16.

The men facing charges were bailed to appear in court next month.

Police say the arrests were the result of a police operation in Armidale targeting child sex offences by the police Child Protection Enforcement Agency (CPEA).

The agency has arrested 65 people and laid 650 charges since it began operating this year, Mr. Carr said.

Health Department Director General Michael Reid confirmed the survivor was a departmental employee.

He described the allegations as "distressing" and said he would fly to Armidale to oversee the department's investigations into the allegations.

As a result of a recommendation by the royal commission, all Health Department employees are subject to criminal record checks by police.

Mr. Reid said 50,000 employees already had undergone checks and some who had criminal records had been sacked, but it was not known if the employee allegedly involved with a paedophile ring had a criminal record or not.

"People who go to health services place their trust in the people they go to," Mr. Reid said. "I think it's most distressing when that trust is abused."

Skinhead attacks shock N. Zealand

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AFP) — Skinheads assaulted a young Pakistani mother and beat up a black man in front of his family in attacks which have shocked New Zealand.

The incidents took place in Christchurch, which is known as the most English of New Zealand's cities.

Police Senior Sergeant Geoff Keona said three skinheads ripped off the traditional headwear of the 22-year-old Pakistani woman and ran off with her seven-month-old baby.

The three offenders pushed the woman around the mall, letting it free-wheel, out-of-control and speed into gutters.

The youths yelled at her to go back to her own country and "take the shit off her head."

The woman always covers her head when out in line with Muslim tradition. One youth ripped the scarf from her head. She tried to put it back and he repeated the act, laughing

and taunting her. The youth then ran off with her baby, while she ran along behind yelling.

"Taking my baby was the most frightening thing. They became really aggressive at that stage, using swear words," she said.

She finally retrieved her daughter, who was unharmed and oblivious to the attack. The offenders watched her return to her car and then followed her home.

Mr. Keona said: "It was a straight-out racist-motivated attack on a defenceless young mother and her baby. Such cowardly behaviour is just not acceptable."

In a different part of the city a group of skinheads attacked Bobby Babacunde, an English migrant of Nigerian descent.

Mr. Babacunde was still in shock Monday after the attack. The youths taunted Mr. Babacunde while he was at the beach with his wife Maria, daughter Jasmine, five, and son Ahe,

two. "I don't know how to explain to Jasmine it happened because we're black and the attackers are just a bunch of losers," he said.

He challenged the group about their language and they confronted him, one of them allegedly striking him.

"I knew I had to free myself from the group and jumped the fence, running towards the police car," Mr. Babacunde was worried about the effect of the attack on his family. "It is humiliating to be called a nigger and something I don't think my children should need to get involved with," he said.

"I am very dark, but in the past people have been supportive. They've been interested in where I'm from and what I'm doing here."

Police said at least 200 people saw the attack at a popular beach, but only two tried to help Mr. Babacunde.

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Hope for large turnout

AS JORDANIANS head to the polls today to elect their representatives for the 13th Parliament, it is reassuring to hear Minister of Interior Naeem Rasheed's pledge that the final list of voters will not contain a single repeated name and that no voter can cast more than one vote. In order to make sure that this solemn pledge will be honoured, each voter will be asked to show an official document to prove his or her identity to avoid any foul play. As voters have a choice between a passport, a valid identification card or a driver's licence to identify themselves, we trust that once a voter casts his ballot, the central computer system will duly record the entry so that the voter may not be able to vote more than once.

The most relevant barometer of today's elections would be the extent of voter turnout. If in fact the greater majority of voters who have registered and picked up their cards visit polling booths, it would be a measure of the success of elections. A good turnout today would mean that people have faith and trust in parliamentary elections despite the controversies of the past few weeks. The fact that more than 80.5 per cent of voting cards have been collected is a good sign.

Once the elections are over, it is hoped that the government would move to address the loopholes and shortcomings of the current election law. We are sure that even after the necessary amendments to the existing legislation are introduced in time for the next general elections in 2001, other negative aspects would be discovered and addressed beforehand. The adjustment of laws is after all a continuous process that may not end as conditions and circumstances keep on changing and evolving.

Meanwhile, we await with a great deal of anticipation the results of this year's elections, and hope that the next Parliament will be as dynamic, spirited and progressive as it should be. It is after all the performance of parliamentarians that can enhance or weaken the democratic process. But in the final analysis it is the people who bear the responsibility for the success or failure of parliamentary democracy as they are the ones who elect their representatives in Parliament.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's Nawaf Zaru said the coming meeting between Israelis and Palestinians in Washington will be a waste of time and yield no positive results. Zaru said Israel's delegation, led by Foreign Minister David Levy, is authorised to offer the Palestinians a proposal wherein Israel will slow down on the Jewish settlements programme in Arab lands if in exchange the Palestinians forget the Oslo accords and the redeployment of the Israeli forces in Palestinian territories. Levy, he said, is expected to tell the Palestinian negotiators that this is Israel's final proposal, and thus present them with a "take it or leave it" situation. According to the writer, the Americans will certainly display a clear-cut stand in support of Israel and will exert pressure on the Palestinians to accept the Israeli proposals. As to the Palestinians, the writer said, though they think that the Washington gathering is a waste of time, they are forced to go where the Americans want them to go and sit at the negotiating table. It is most distressing, said Zaru, to see the Palestinians left alone facing the formidable foes of the Arab Nation.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said the U.S. sanctions on Iraq will continue as long as Saddam Hussein is in power regardless of the suffering of the Iraqi people. But, he said, the question of removing Saddam Hussein from power is up to the Iraqi people and no one else, and it seems that the Iraqis are not concerned with removing the president from office. The Americans are in fact holding on to this excuse to perpetuate the sanctions on Iraq to keep it weak and unable to build up a force against Israel, said Qallab. He said that in contrast the U.S. has tried to pressure Cuba with the hope of toppling Fidel Castro and has maintained the sanctions on Havana for the past 35 years without affecting an end to the communist regime in that country, even despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. As long as the Iraqi and U.S. positions are irreconcilable, he said, there is no end in sight for the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

The View from the Fourth Circle

Jordan's 1997 elections: Stepping forwards, backwards and sideways

By Rami G. Khouri

THE PARLIAMENTARY elections in Jordan today are neither the "democratic festival and wedding" that the government boasts about, nor the pre-fixed electoral hoax that the opposition ridicules and boycotts. These elections accurately reflect the wider, tension-filled contestation of political power throughout the Arab World: the modern Arab security state and its oligarchic elite seek to maintain their firm grip on public power, while a diverse, often odd combination of opposition forces seeks to force greater power-sharing among a wider range of political actors and socio-economic constituencies. In this context, I would point out the following noteworthy aspects of these elections:

1. The process of Arab political change and democratisation will be long, slow and erratic, normally taking two steps forward and then one step backwards. This is the fourth significant election in Jordan since 1989 (three parliamentary elections in 1989, 1993 and 1997, and one nationwide municipal vote in 1995). It is a giant step sideways — because the forward movement of our commitment to electoral pluralism has been offset by the backwards direction of the revealed shortcomings in the quality of our democratic practices.

2. The main issue being subjected to the judgement of the Jordanian people is not the ideology or political programme of this or that candidate: it is the credibility and relevance of the very political system that operates below the level of the monarchy. In travelling around the country for weeks exhorting the citizenry to vote, the prime minister eloquently defined the real contours of the current political contest in the country as between those who trust the good faith of the government and those who do not. This is an early warning sign of real potential problems — if the citizenry continues to lose confidence in the efficacy of the existing political institutions.

This would be no surprise, given the recent displays of personal pride and political amateurism by both the government and the opposition. Despite even His Majesty King Hussein's personal exhortations, the government and opposition alike displayed incredible political incompetence and laxity in their inability to hold even just a "dialogue" about the opposition's complaints and its threat to boycott the elections. This should go down in modern Arab political history as a most embarrassing and acute display of political provincialism — of mind-

sets and world views so narrow in their parameters, so self-centred in their goals, and so riddled with an exaggerated sense of honour, that they blinded the people involved to the wider issues of the public's well-being and the true national interest.

The boycott of the elections by the opposition hurts the credibility of the whole parliamentary exercise in Jordan, but it is also a blow to the relevance of the opposition itself. Boycotting is a display of weakness, not strength. The boycott raises issues about the state's handling of its political power, but it raises equally important issues about the continuing decline of the Islamists' political standing in Jordan.

The opposition's boycott and the state's erratic performance have both damaged the otherwise impressive political transition that we have experienced since 1989. We are now in the awkward situation where all of the key modern political institutions of the country — the press, political parties, the opposition, the professional associations, and the parliament — will wake up after election day and find themselves collectively weakened, discredited or marginalised in the eyes of many Jordanians. However, the monarchy, tribalism, religion, ethnicity and other such traditional institutions remain strong and credible. The political system will need some serious re-tooling after the elections.

3. Some key opposition accusations have been verified by the government's admission that around 120,000 invalid voter registration cards or voters' listed names have been found and deleted from the electoral rolls, including voting cards of dead people. Journalists and politicians have also documented many instances of voters' registration cards being picked up by candidates without the voters' knowledge or permission. The good news is that the government identified and deleted the phantom voters and is prosecuting candidates who have bent the rules; the bad news is that the electoral system that has allowed such gross improprieties remains fundamentally unchanged. Other contested yet unresolved aspects of the election system include some candidates' accusations that they have been harassed by officials or security forces, denied public speaking halls, had their street banners torn down, and other such charges.

The government's confused attitude to requests for international monitoring of the elections has aggravated the dilemma of the credibility of our electoral system.

Jordan has now enriched humankind's political heritage with the innovative concept of "election watching," which, logistically and politically, falls somewhere in between bird watching and election monitoring. The government would have generated much more respect and credibility had it agreed to election monitoring from the start: instead, it was pushed into the corner of having to accept international observers because of the incrementally damaging revelations of electoral sloppiness in recent months. Since we allow international values, friends and partners to check our fiscal books, securities regulations, prison systems, and ship-board exports and imports, we should feel pride, not shame, in opening our electoral system to monitoring by democratic friends.

4. Two international reports this week by respected institutions — Article 19 in London and Human Rights Watch-Middle East in New York — have both sharply and publicly criticised aspects of Jordanian political culture and recent government moves. The reports speak of Jordan's "climate of mounting restrictions on freedom of expression and association," "a marked deterioration in respect for basic freedoms," "the government's continuing wariness about freedom of expression and the process of democratisation," and the 1997 press and publications temporary law representing "a real setback... (that) appears designed to change the mood away from reform and greater openness, and to signal a return to the darker days of closer state control."

The convergence of international and Jordanian concerns about some government practices requires the Jordanian state and people to devise an independent mechanism to examine the issues raised in recent months, and to point the way to improved means of achieving consensus and good governance. The scale, seriousness and verity of at least some opposition charges against the government require that the entire process of conducting elections be taken out of the hands of the executive branch and the Ministry of Interior and placed in the charge of an independent electoral commission. Our monetary policy and securities markets are regulated by independent bodies, and our electoral life warrants the same sort of safeguards. Elections are the temporary symptom that points us to the larger underlying challenge that we must face: the nature of governance and the flow of power in Arab political culture.

Letter from Scotland Edinburgh and the Arab World

By Peter Hinchcliffe

EDINBURGH has the feel of a capital city and of a Northern European one. Very northern at the moment with the temperature a chilly 6 degrees and a cold wind whistling through the streets. In fact since the Act of Union in 1701, uniting England and Scotland under the British Crown (The United Kingdom — also including the Principality of Wales) Edinburgh has not been a capital at all. Rule has been from London. But now that a majority of Scots have voted in a recent referendum for devolution — a large measure of self-government including a parliament with tax raising powers — Edinburgh will once again enjoy capital city status. And I, in my house just (three kilometres) inside Scotland, will look north towards Edinburgh rather than south in the direction of London.

At the heart of old Edinburgh lies the ancient University — 414 years old. Founded in 1583 when Queen Elizabeth the First was on the English throne, the Ottomans consolidating their grip on the Levant and North Africa and during the same year that Islam was expanding to the Philippines and New Guinea. Although not the oldest university in the British Isles it is one of the most distinguished with a long history of teaching the classic languages and cultures of the Middle East. The first professor of Oriental Languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew) was appointed in 1751. Arabic then and throughout the 19th Century was chiefly of interest to Christian theology students. Arabic and Islamic studies were an important part of the theology curriculum.

Academic interest at Edinburgh in the wider Arab World, rather than on narrow religious aspects was kindled by the appointment as principal and vice-chancellor of Sir William Muir in 1885. He was the most distinguished Scottish scholar of his day, famous for his "Life of Mahomet," which, for English-speaking people, long remained the standard biography of the Prophet. For mediaeval historians his other work, "The Caliphate," remained the authoritative study for more than 60 years, and is still an important work of reference.

Since Muir's time there have been several more distinguished Arabists. Richard Bell, whose name is almost synonymous with Koranic studies. Dr. Bob Sarjeant, a native of Edinburgh and a great expert on the Yemen. I knew him well when I was working with the British administration in the Aden Protectorate — the colonial forerunner of the Peoples'

Democratic Republic of the Yemen. But the university's international reputation in the field of Islamic studies is identified with the name of William Watt. He wrote more than 20 books on Islamic topics; the best known being "Mohammad, Prophet and Statesman," "Islam and the Integration of Society" and his study of Al Ghazali "Muslim Intellectual" were also ground-breakers in the English language.

Professor Watt was the founding father of the Muir Institute — the institution which covers all aspects of teaching on Islam and the Middle East — art, linguistics, languages (Arabic, Turkish and Persian) history, religion and politics. Many Arab students pass through the institute including several Jordanian postgraduates. I currently supervise one young Jordanian (sponsored by the Crown Prince's office) and a Korean graduate of Yarmouk University who are both starting Ph.D. courses on

For once, because of the image of Israel and Israeli policies projected by the Netanyahu government, British press coverage of events in the Middle East has focused on the plight of the Palestinians rather than on the more usual themes of terrorism and Islamic 'fundamentalism.'

aspects of Jordanian democracy.

Professor Yasser Suleiman, a Palestinian by origin, and the first Arab to head a department at Edinburgh, leads the departments of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies. He lived in Jordan for many years, and like me, brings some "frontline" insight into the study of the region. My appointment as an Honorary Fellow is meant to balance the book knowledge of academics with the personal experience of someone who has worked in the region in a non-academic capacity. I concentrate on modern Middle Eastern politics whilst some of my colleagues are

happier dealing with the Crusades or the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The big forthcoming event is the visit to the University by HRH Crown Prince Hassan in late November. He is to give the British Institute for Middle East Studies (BRISMES) annual lecture. This is to be the inaugural event for the Muir Institute in its new guise: The Edinburgh Institute for Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. "Muir" has been dropped as it is felt that it is a mistake to name a body after a long dead academic who had the reputation of being "Orientalist" in his outlook. A scholar certainly, but with a tendency to view the Arab World romantically and eurocentrically-looking at stereotypes rather than real people. And judging them in a European context rather than a regional one. But in that he was a product of his times. Nowadays with so many distinguished Arabs, and not just Europeans and Americans, writing about the Middle East (I mean in English) — Professor Edward Said being a case in point — the whole balance of Oriental studies has changed towards a better informed and objective view of the Arab World. Especially so in institutions of higher education like Edinburgh.

Thus the Crown Prince will be speaking to a well-informed audience, aware of the issues and likely to be generally sympathetic to the Arab position. For once, because of the image of Israel and Israeli policies projected by the Netanyahu government, British press coverage of events in the Middle East has focused on the plight of the Palestinians rather than on the more usual themes of terrorism and Islamic "fundamentalism." A generally positive picture of the Arab World with the notable exception of the sensationalised and distorted media coverage of the murder trial of two British nurses in Saudi Arabia. But I shall leave my thoughts on that and a report on the Crown Prince's visit to a later article. In the meanwhile an extra pullover and a sip of the locally brewed Scotch whisky will help to ward off the cold. At least that is my excuse!

The writer, a retired diplomat, was the British ambassador to Jordan until March, 1997. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

With intent to harm

To the Editor:

The writer addressed the following letter to the British newspaper The Guardian on Nov. 1, 1997.

I AM writing this letter with reference to an article written by David Sharrock, dated Jerusalem and published in your issue of Oct. 25, 1997.

To say the least, the headline you have chosen for the article "Christians being persecuted by Palestinians" is most unfortunate and is not in line with the general attitude of balanced reporting for which your daily has become famous and most respected. Christians are not being persecuted by Palestinians, and we are the people most qualified to say so.

The Israeli government official report which you cited is biased and published with the intent to harm the essence of pleasant and brotherly coexistence amongst the Palestinians. The allegations in that report are unworthy of an official document and should not be given any publicity as they are tools of psychological warfare in a conflict that is still raging between Israeli aggression, on the one hand, and the Palestinian rights for self-determination and a state of their own, on only a part of their land which has been occupied by brutal force, on the other hand.

The writer, accompanied by seven leading members of "The Orthodox Society," which has over 2000 members in Palestine and Jordan, made an extensive visit in May 1997 to 17 Orthodox communities between Nakura in the north and Gaza in the south. All of them have been living normally, on good terms with people and authorities around them and looking forward to the day of deliverance from Israeli occupation. Palestinian Christians have been happy with political developments amongst them which included their having two ministers in the cabinet. Mrs. Hanan Ashrawi for Higher Education and Mr. Elias Freij for Tourism as well as six deputies in the National Legislative Council. Many of them have been deeply involved in the economic and social development that has been deprived them, thanks to Israeli occupation, for nearly half a century.

The Christian community has indeed dwindled due to the insecurity and lack of employment opportunities under occupation, conditions that have forced them to seek their livelihood elsewhere. Let the peace come and give the Palestinians the possibility to return and the world will see a higher than average return amongst the Christians. The Holy Land, and Jerusalem in particular, live in their conscience and the feeling of belonging is very strong amongst them no matter where they have had to start a new home.

One last word about Muslim converts to Christianity and the one in Nabulus being urged to renounce his new faith. Believe me when I say that this would have been the exact situation if it happened to a Jew or a Christian. So why should the Israeli government give time to a normal incident which happens in many other parts of the world. The purpose is obvious, and it will be cause for happiness for Christians and Muslims alike to witness more tolerance amongst followers of the Jewish faith.

We are deeply involved in interfaith dialogue with many British, European and American institutions and personalities, and we shall be grateful if you kindly publish our comments so that true knowledge may be exposed to all.

Dr. Raouf Abu Jaber
Chairman
The Orthodox Society
Amman

Feature

Save the

Iraqi president
commanders

Save the children: Other considerations in abolishing child labour

By Owen Bowcott
in Dhaka

HANIF MOHAMMAD is 10. For the past two years he has loaded and unpacked trays of sweet pastries from the scorching mouth of a domed brick oven — often seven days a week, up to 17 hours a day.

The walls of the bakery where he slaves in the Mirpur district of Dhaka are blackened and charred with congealed grime. The stench of an open sewer drifts into the windowless lodging room, across a muddy back yard, which he shares with a dozen youngsters.

He has never been to school nor had a holiday since leaving his native village. Most of the 350 takas (£5) he earns each month is, he says, sent to support his family: "I can spend a little if I want." His boss, anxious about the questioning, pushes forward his justification. "Hanif is new here," he claims. "He is an apprentice learning the trade. His food is free."

Exploitation of child labour is flourishing in Bangladesh and permeates much of the developing world. Shock revelations about grim conditions endured by under-age workers hit the headlines with increasing frequency as the globalised economy links more and more Western consumers to the remotest corners of the world.

Earlier this summer a report by the charity Christian Aid claimed that Indian children as young as seven were stitching footballs bearing a picture of the former Manchester United striker, Eric Cantona. The club denied that the balls were being manufactured for them and insisted that their suppliers are required to give undertakings forgoing the use of child labour.

No one in Britain wants to be associated with the outrage generated by the employment of school-age youngsters. Last week, however, the Indian Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association published its own findings in an attempt to rebut the allegations, claiming that the Christian Aid report had "attacked our traditional family values in which the work culture involves the entire family as a unit."

Seen through the desperation of the disadvantaged, the moral imperative may indeed look very different. In Bangladesh, a country where 67 per cent of those under five are classified as malnourished, it is often extreme poverty which drives parents to send their own infants out to augment pitiful household incomes.

The persistence of child labour in the poorest nations is now forcing the West to reassess how it pursues its crusading campaigns to abolish under-age work and promote fair trade standards. At a joint conference convened in Oslo this month by the U.N.'s children's body UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the governments of more than 40 states — including the U.K., U.S., India, Bangladesh and Pakistan — reviewed plans about what can be done for the 200 million children below the age of 15 who are estimated to be working.

Translating indignation about violated childhoods into a force for social improvement in the Third World has proved far more complex than at first imagined. In some cases it has provoked open resentment of American and European attitudes.

Typical are the views of Peter Stalker of UNICEF's Dhaka office: "It may mollify workers in Western countries who feel exposed to unfair competition to follow a strict principle of eliminating children from workplaces. It may reassure concerned consumers who feel their goods are 'contaminated' with child labour. But it may actually hurt the children."

These tensions are evident in Bangladesh, one of the first countries threatened with a selective boycott by Western consumers. Four years ago, Senator Tom Harkin introduced a bill into the U.S. Congress proposing trade sanctions banning

the importation of Bangladeshi clothing produced by child labour. Faced with the loss of lucrative markets, the factory owners respoonded by instantly dismissing as many as 50,000 under-age workers from the burgeoning garments industry.

Many of the sacked children were left destitute. Rather than entering state primary schools, which do not open up an immediate avenue to employment, others resorted to hazardous forms of work such as sorting rubbish, street scavenging, prostitution, brick-breaking, or leather work. The numbers of homeless children also increased.

As aid agencies become more aware of the side-effects of clamping down on child labour they have begun to rethink their approach. A ground-breaking Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), UNICEF and the ILO is now presented as a model for how other private industries might be persuaded to gradually reduce their child labour force.

The key to its success has been a rigorous inspection system, designed to prevent factories sneaking children back on to their crowded floors. A further section of the agreement provides for the BGMEA to contribute \$250,000 a year to pay dismissed children 300 taka (£4.30) a month as an encouragement for them to attend school.

Firms which operate within the MOU are required to open their doors to unannounced teams of inspectors. One such visit to the premises of Festive (PVT) Ltd in Mirpur which 1 witnessed revealed hundreds of women cutting cloth, sewing shirts, packing completed shirts into plastic bags and stapling price labels in the cramped and humid atmosphere; but no under-age children. The clothes being made were labelled "Gola," a British sportswear trademark.

Though on this occasion the efforts of the inspectors scanning faces for those suspected of being under 14 were in vain, in May another team did discover five children working in the Festive factory whom they believed to be aged only 12 or 13; in Bangladesh few possess birth certificates and many are genuinely ignorant of their age. Iqbal Hussain, the managing director, insisted that the children picked out then had looked under 14 because "it's difficult to judge age in Bangladesh, they are not well-nourished." Medical tests had been conducted, he added, to establish their age. The BGMEA's chairman, Mostafa Golam Qudus, later confirmed that Festive's appeal over the children had been turned down and the firm duly "cautioned."

Hussain was not convinced that banning child labour was the best policy. "I would have thought they would be better protected here," he said. "A mother who used to bring her girl of 13 to the factory came in one day and said the child had been raped. They are safer coming to the factory than roaming around."

The Gola-labelled goods are being imported by Ethel Austin, a Merseyside company whose buying director, Terry Buckley, said the order had been placed with Festive through an agent approved by the BGMEA in July, after the children had been removed by the inspectors. "We take a very specific stance that we don't want to be involved in factories indulging in child labour," he said. "We had an audit done by the manufacturers' association to ensure that the factory is on an approved list."

The firm which owns the Gola brand name, Jacobson and Sons, said it had only recently commenced licensing, had inherited a network of existing licenses and did not directly import or sell garments. "Our client does not condone, nor has it ever, the use of child labour," lawyers for the firm said.

One example of how pervasive child labour is within Bangladesh came at the state-run Ahasola Orphanage in Dhaka which British Airways recently announced it plans to support. In a shed at the back of the compound, a 10-year-old girl was working seven hours a day at a weaving frame. "The

money goes to the orphanage because they get everything free of cost," explained the overseer.

BA, which has aided the nearby Sreepur Orphanage for the past decade, admitted that it had not been aware that children were working at Ahasola. "It was identified back in June as somewhere that could do with help," a spokeswoman added. "We would hope that any support we give would influence what happens there and maybe eradicate it (child labour)."

Kazi Omar Khayam, a journalist, aged 17, who has made his name in Bangladesh campaigning against child labour, accepts that in some cases it can be the lesser of two appalling evils. "If children don't work, they will die. They are working for food, they are poor."

"I ask them if they want to go to school, most of them say 'yes.' But some say they will learn as they grow up. They think what's the point of getting an education? I have been to the United States, as well, and seen child labour in New York's Chinatown." A clear division is apparent between those in the West who want immediate abolition and those, mainly in the underdeveloped world, who accept that progress may be more gradual as poorer societies become industrialised.

Torn between the impoverished desperation of Bangladesh's poor and disapproval of exploitation, UNICEF

staff in Dhaka now draw a distinction between "child labour" and "child work." There is hazardous labour, such as Hanif Muhammad's physically abusive days in a sweltering bakery; and then there is part-time work, like helping parents gather in a harvest, or domestic work, which allows time for schooling. The latter, they imply, may be inevitable temporarily in an emerging society.

Impatient for action, the U.S. Congress earlier last month passed legislation banning the importation of goods made by indentured or enslaved child labour. The bill, backed by a coalition of labour and human rights groups, is targeted chiefly at bonded child labour in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal.

One way or another, the message that education is the key to cracking the child labour problem appears to be getting through — even if it is for reasons of economic self-interest. Belatedly, Bangladesh has appreciated that unless it educates its workforce it will never become a south-east Asian tiger economy. This year the government announced that it would extend compulsory education from up to the age of 10 to up to 14. But, as is so often the way with these things, no date for implementing the plan has yet been announced.

The Guardian

UNICEF chief urges a timetable for ending child labour

OSLO — Calling worldwide statistics on child labour "appalling and unacceptable," Carol Bellamy, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), last week urged governments to adopt a time-bound programme of action to eliminate all extreme forms of child labour especially labour that denies children their fundamental right to education.

The world's 250 million child labourers, most of them engaged in extreme and hazardous forms of work, are being robbed of their fundamental rights — not only including the right to develop to the fullest through education, but "the right to a childhood," Bellamy told the 40-nation International Conference on Child Labour in Oslo on Oct. 29.

Calling education "the single most effective tool we have for eliminating child labour," the UNICEF chief told the ministerial segment of the four-day conference that "it is increasingly clear there will be no long-term solution to child labour unless the challenge of basic education for all is also addressed."

"Quality primary education that is relevant and affordable to poor families will go far in attacking the root causes of child labour," Bellamy added. "And the benefits will accrue especially to girls, who make up 60 per cent of the 140 million children worldwide who are not in school."

She said the link between child labour and education can be seen in the millions of children who are available for exploitative work precisely because they have no access to affordable, quality education — while millions of others cannot exercise their right to education because of factors associated with their jobs, ranging from long work hours to scheduling conflicts.

In her address, the UNICEF executive director paid tribute to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for "the magnificent leadership it has provided, and continues to provide" in the fight against child labour.

The ILO has proposed the adoption of a convention and recommendation to combat the worst forms of child labour, including the persistent exploitation of children in slave-like and bonded conditions; in hazardous and arduous work; and in prostitution, pornography and other intolerable situations.

Bellamy told the Oslo conferees that the ILO conventions on child labour, including the most recent, ILO Convention 138, have been "powerful tools" for advocacy against child labour. But she acknowledged that "even the combined power of these standards and instruments has not been enough to eliminate the worst aspects of child labour."

"That is why UNICEF wholeheartedly endorses the idea of a new and more focused ILO convention," the executive director said, "a convention that will set specific, time-bound targets for the elimination of extreme forms of child labour, such as bonded labour and trafficking; that is focused specifically at children under 12; and that includes in its definition of extremely exploitative labour any form of work that denies a child's right to basic education."

Bellamy cited a range of UNICEF efforts to fight child labour in partnership with the ILO, governments and civil society, including programmes in Benin, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Pakistan and Brazil. In Bangladesh, she noted, a landmark government-backed agreement has combined measures to end under-age child labour in the garment industry with the creation of education programmes and direct assistance for the families of child workers.

The United Nations Children's Fund

Iraqi president meets top military commanders amidst world tension

(Continued from page 1)

forces enforcing a "no-fly" zone over northern Iraq.

In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said the aircraft were being deployed "because of violations of the northern no-fly zone" set up over northern Iraq following the 1991 Gulf War to protect the Iraqi-Kurdish population.

But U.S. Army Colonel Richard Bridges said the deployment of extra aircraft to Turkey had long been planned and had "absolutely no connection" with the confrontation with Iraq over U.N. arms inspections.

The Iraqi leader has ordered U.S. arms inspectors working for UNSCOM to leave Iraq by Wednesday.

The U.N. Security Council has warned Iraq of "serious consequences" for its defiance of the United Nations, while the U.S. has not ruled out the use of military force against Baghdad.

President Hussein called for dialogue to resolve the standoff with U.N. weapons inspectors, INA said on Monday.

"President Saddam Hussein stressed the need for dialogue to put things in order and on their right track," INA said.

The Iraqi President said Iraq wanted "a clear and complete picture" of when the U.N. would lift all of its sanctions against Iraq, INA said.

Earlier Monday, Iraqi authorities blocked American members of a U.N. arms inspection team from entering a weapons site, prompting the United Nations to halt all inspections, a U.N.

official said.

United Nations arms inspectors suspended work on Monday after Iraq carried out its threat to ban U.S. experts from taking part in visits to weapons sites, a U.N. official here announced.

The incident followed a four-day break in inspections since President Hussein decided to bar U.S. nationals working for UNSCOM in charge of dismantling Iraq.

In a bid to persuade Iraq to lift its ban, under which seven U.S. nationals are posted in Baghdad with UNSCOM, have until Wednesday to leave, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan decided to send three envoys to Iraq.

Nils Carlstrom, director of the U.N. Arms Monitoring Centre in Baghdad, said all inspections were terminated because of Iraq's refusal on Monday to allow U.S. nationals to enter a ballistic missiles site with their UNSCOM colleagues.

The head of the inspection team, Mr. Carlstrom, argued that he could not carry out his work without the U.S. experts, adding that the latest incident was "peaceful" and all the inspectors returned to their offices in Baghdad.

After consultations with UNSCOM Chairman Butler, who is in New York, the commission decided to "terminate" its inspections, Director Carlstrom said. Two other inspections had been planned on Monday.

INA quoted President Hussein as saying during a cabinet meeting on Sunday: "They are supposed to come for dialogue in order to put

things in order... in a way that rights and commitments should be completely clear without ambiguity and procrastination."

The agency also quoted the Iraqi president as saying: "In the proposal we submitted, we said even a representative from the Americans within the five permanent member states [of the U.N. Security Council]... could come [to Baghdad]. We hear from him and he hears from us."

"Some persons and states had given us promises, but they had withdrawn their promises. The clearance we seek should be from [U.N.] organisations and within clear agreement," the Iraqi president said, according to INA.

"If they [inspectors] have a question here or there, these questions and explanation have lasted for seven years and maybe they will last more... the bulk of them are silly and provocative," he said.

Channel Two also reported that Mr. Mordechai was informed August 1 of the planned attack on Mr.

Northern candidates mobilise resources to transport voters to election centres

(Continued from page 1)

of the three seats, is guaranteed for former Deputy Abdul Karim Dughmi.

Candidate Theifallah Akhu Ershideh withdrew in favour of the two other members of his clan.

Al Urdun Al Jadid predicted that only 25,000 voters will show up at the polling stations, and

that the minimum numbers of votes needed by any one candidate to win range between 3,250 to 3,500.

Candidates in these vast districts also rented cars and buses to ferry voters to and from the polling station, election watchers said.

Tough competition will dominate the districts of Kourah and Northern Ghour, where people

expect the winners to contribute to solving poverty and unemployment.

In 1993 elections, 70 per cent of the registered voters, in this district cast their votes.

According to figures released by the government 59,549 voters out of the 70,572 registered voters have collected their cards in these two districts.

Israeli PM responsible for murder attempt fiasco, Mossad chief says

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Misha'al was hospitalised in a serious condition while the two agents were arrested after two of Mr. Misha'al's bodyguards intervened.

The Hamas official was saved after Israel provided the antidote after King Hussein threatened to sever diplomatic ties with Israel if Mr. Misha'al died.

Channel Two also reported that Mr. Mordechai was informed August 1 of the planned attack on Mr.

Misha'al in Amman. Mr. Mordechai says he was not consulted and that Netanyahu made the decision alone.

Mr. Netanyahu testified for three hours Oct. 24 before the commission investigating the assassination attempt, giving it the information he had before he approved the operation.

The prime minister formed the commission at the beginning of October, but public television said it has no real power because its recommendations will

not have the same weight as those of an official commission of inquiry.

An official commission would have been able to directly implicate Mr. Netanyahu, public television said.

The prime minister said he would take "entire responsibility" for Mossad's actions, but he refused to resign as his predecessor from the Labour Party, Shimon Peres, had demanded.

11 Karak candidates announce 'last minute' withdrawals from the race

(Continued from page 1)

in today's elections in the district.

According to one observer, "only those who have fellow tribesmen running, will turn out at today's polls, those who don't will probably stay home in this cold weather."

The situation in Karak remains unpredictable despite the tribal affiliation that dominates the political arena there.

Observers still believe that candidates from the three major tribes that only nominated one contestant each, are the clear front-runners in Karak.

Khaled Tarawneh of the 6,500-vote-strong Tarawneh tribe, Ayeed Adaleh of the 6,000-vote-strong Ghassaneh tribe, and Riyad Sarairah of the 4,000-vote-strong Sarairah tribe, are the only candidates of their respective clans, making their chances stronger than candidates from other tribes that have nominated more than one candidate each.

Also seen by observers as winners today, are former

12th Parliament deputy Abdul Hadi Majali and former ambassador Anjad Hazza' Majali, both of the 4,500-vote-strong Majali tribe.

Abdul Hadi Majali, who in 1993 elections, won with 3,871 votes, is considered by many as a favourite by virtue of his experience in different public posts and in the political arena.

Other candidates are counting on their personal reputation to gather votes from beyond their own clans, observers say.

As for the two Christian seats allocated to the southern district, observers favour incumbent Nazih Ammarin, who won with 1,073 votes in the 1993 elections.

They also see former deputy in the 11th Parliament (1989-1993) Abdullah Zureikat and Mukram Qsous as runners-up for the second seat.

Karak is considered as one of the country's over-represented districts, with roughly one seat per 10,000 voters, compared to Amman with one seat per 20,000 voters.

Jordanians head for ballot boxes today

(Continued from page 1)

in the elections with one candidate.

The leftist Jordanian Unionist Democratic Party is participating in the elections with its top men, including Secretary General Issa Mulanat (Amman's 3rd District), former Deputy Bassam Haddadin (Zarqa) and former Minister Mustafa Sheikhat (Balqa).

The Islamic Action Front (IAF), eight left-leaning opposition parties, the Union of the Professional

Associations, and two groups of independents under the leadership of head of the Jordanian Engineers Association Leif Shbeilat and former Prime Ministers Taber Masri and Ahmad Obeidat, also joined the Islamists in their boycott of the elections.

The boycotting groups cited the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, normalisation with the Jewish state, as well as recent temporary laws that they consider curbing public freedoms, as the reasons behind their decision.

TTTERS
tent to harm

Dr. Rami G. Khouri
The Orthodox Syrian

RJ adopts new plans to reactivate operations

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The president of Royal Jordanian (RJ) said Monday that the Kingdom's flag carrier has adopted new plans to reactivate its operations and pointed out that the airline's privatisation process will be concluded in the coming two years.

Speaking at a press conference following the opening session of the IATA's 53th general assembly conference in which 140 airline companies have participated, President Nader Dahabi announced that RJ has signed an alliance agreement with the Trans World Airline (TWA) to facilitate the operations of the Jordanian airline in the United States.

Mr. Dahabi told reporters that the Jordanian government has approved a restructuring plan "which should pave the way for the privatisation of the airline in the coming 18 to 24 months."

The RJ chief said that during 1997, the national carrier took a closer look at the route network and the cost structure.

"As a result of thorough examination, we decided to suspend operations to several destinations," Mr. Dahabi added. "That was due to poor performance at a number of stations despite various corrective measures that were taken to improve the situation at those stations."

He elaborated that one of the hard decisions that had been taken was to suspend operations to Canada after almost 10 years and to remove Singapore from RJ's Far East network.

"We hope that we will bring back all these destinations to our route network if the situation changes," Mr. Dahabi noted.

He said that during this year, RJ has expanded its operations to other destinations such as Detroit "which was an immediate success and served the need in the state of Michigan."

He added that among other new lines that were reinstated was Kuwait, following six years of suspension because of the 1990-91 Gulf war.

He indicated that RJ is planning to reinstate its flights to Tehran following a feasibility study that proved that it will be a viable step.

He mentioned that during 1996, RJ has carried a total number of 1,299,212 passengers while the number in the first 10 months of this year reached 1,168,973.

He announced that the total seat factor has also increased from 65.8 per cent last year to 69.2 in the first eight months of 1997.

"The present fleet of TriStars, Airbus 310 and 320, will be slightly adjusted. The plan now is to phase out the TriStar aircraft by mid-98 and replace them with A310s and 320s," Mr. Dahabi said.

"With such a fleet composition, RJ would be able to better utilise its various resources and achieve a better route economics," he said.

Mr. Dahabi said the alliance agreement reached between RJ and TWA will enhance cooperation between the two sides.

"This new alliance, which has come to light



A general scene of the opening session of IATA's general assembly meeting which started in Amman Monday.

after almost two years of serious negotiations and planning, is an integral part of the total restructuring programme that Royal Jordanian is embarking upon," Mr. Dahabi said in a joint press conference with TWA Chairman Gerald Ginter.

"We are very happy to see that we have finally started this historic and, hopefully, successful agreement with a major U.S. and world carrier such as the TWA," Mr. Dahabi said.

"Jordan has always had a very liberal aviation air service agreement with the United States," said Mr. Dahabi, adding that the Kingdom was the first country outside Europe to sign an open sky agreement with the U.S.

He said that the "Code Sharing Agreement" will allow RJ to reach more cities in the U.S. through TWA's extensive U.S. networks. "We would not have been able to reach such a service on our own," he added.

Mr. Ginter said that by adding Amman to the TWA flights "we reinforce TWA's position as the premier U.S. carrier to this region."

"We fully share the RJ's excitement over this new partnership. We are looking forward to enhance our joint service as partners for years to come," he said.

Meanwhile, IATA President Pierre Jeannot said in a separate press conference that war prices between world airlines are continuing and fuel cost increases

will affect the airline profits in 1997 despite sharp growth in air traffic.

Mr. Jeannot said that the overall profit forecast for this year is estimated at \$4.5 billion up from \$3 billion recorded last year.

Mr. Jeannot said that he is not proposing any increase in airline prices. "I propose that there be, perhaps, more discipline in the way that we are addressing the markets," he said, adding that IATA is encouraging very much the reduction in costs.

"Aviation will continue to be increasingly affordable and its a question of ensuring that our costs are driven down, so there is profitability for the industry," Mr. Jeannot said.

"From what we have seen in some situations of

depression, airlines some times register a loss for a year or two, but then they return to profitability again," he said, adding that "the long-term future for aviation continues to be very bright in terms of growth."

"It is a very active market. There are many different routes and markets and many different attacks on each other's market. So it is very difficult, I think, to control all that and you have to distribute the responsibility. I think we, still, have to learn how to do that," he added.

He said that Asia "will continue its path of fulfilling some of the forecast that 50 per cent of the world aviation will be generated in that region in few more years."

G-15 demands global rules for foreign exchange market

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Leaders from the Group of Fifteen (G-15) developing countries kicked off a three-day summit Monday by calling for international regulations to be imposed on the world foreign exchange market.

"The heads of state and government of the Group of Fifteen call upon the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to study recent developments in currency markets with a view to appropriately regulating them in order to make them more open and transparent," a group statement said.

"They also task their ministers of finance, governors of central banks and other appro-

priate authorities to consider the matter and make the necessary recommendations," it added.

G-15 leaders view recent developments in world financial markets with "deep concern," the statement said.

In opening the annual summit earlier Monday, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad warned other leaders of a "new imperialism" in global markets which threatened to be "more noxious and debilitating than the old."

Mr. Mahathir's remarks struck a chord with other members of the group including Indonesian President Suharto who suggested

that economic globalisation should be "managed" by the United Nations.

In his first major appearance since a massive bailout for Indonesia was launched by the IMF, Suharto said "the hard work, diligence and sacrifices over several decades were wiped out overnight."

Only the U.N. "could assume with credibility the task of ensuring justice and equity in the economic relations between and among nations," he said.

Among the other leaders present, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe said Africa risked being "marginalised" by globalisation and free trade.

"For most of the developing

countries, the gains of globalisation and trade liberalisation are yet to be felt," he said. "In the case of Africa which has 33 of the world's 48 least-developed countries, there is a real danger that the continent may be marginalised in the unfolding process."

Indian Vice President Krishna Kant said developing countries should be given "insulation" from the "whims of market sentiment and exchange rate fluctuations" between major currencies.

Speaking on behalf of Asian members, Mr. Kant said the G-15 could develop "suitable strategies" to deal with the problem. "The recent volatility calls for a new approach to

regional and international cooperation," he said. Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, speaking for Latin America and the Caribbean, said the turmoil was "compromising our development and forcing us to strengthen the financial sector and create an international mechanism that allows us to face efficiently and adequately problems of monetary stability."

But the harshest criticism of recent financial developments came from Mahathir. "Since the beginning of time, market forces by themselves have been exploitative," the Malaysian prime minister said, noting that "a few bottles of whisky was the price paid for

Manhattan Island."

"A world trading system cannot rely entirely on market forces. It is time that we draw up fair rules for the marketplace," he said.

"If we don't, then the fight for independence will have to begin all over again. For the present market rules will surely result in a new imperialism, more noxious and debilitating than the old."

Mr. Mahathir has repeatedly blamed foreigners, notably American financier George Soros, for the recent turmoil which has wiped up to 40 per cent off the Malaysian currency's value while sharply eroding local stock prices.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) There's wheeling and dealing going on behind the scenes. How the people in authority handle it is where you can tell the difference. Vote for the one most likely to stand for liberty, justice and success. Avoid the candidate who wants to make all your decisions for you. Keep that for yourself.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It's Election Day! You want a leader who can take you forward, while still maintaining the valuable lessons learned in the past. Scrutinise the candidates carefully. As you well-know, what people say and what they do are not always the same.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Make sure your tax money is being spent wisely. If a candidate is funding programmes you think are important, that's good. If he or she is inspiring people to fund their own programmes, that's better. That way, the money you put into the kitty generates more. Not too shabby!

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) With Mercury in Scorpio right now, what people say might be quite different from what they actually do. Don't fall for the rhetoric. Go for the substance over symbolism. Remember that today, as you vote. And have a great time while you're at it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) It's noticeable all day long that the talking has stopped. You're just going to have to get in there and get the job done. Meanwhile, think about electing the person who's going to make your money go the furthest. You're in control of the situation and how you exercise that control is by voting. So don't forget to do that today.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't forget to vote. Remember, you want somebody who can spend your money wisely and do things for other people in a way that empowers them to care for themselves. That's how you operate, so make sure your elected officials do, too.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Think in terms of how the elected officials are going to protect your home and family. For example, are they taking so much in taxes you can't afford to by a house? Those tax dollars are actually your money, you know. Make sure it's being spent wisely.

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SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The money coming in is barely enough to meet expenses. If you notice that the taxes are a little too high, maybe you can do something about it now. If you think it would be nice to have more control over your money, make it known with your vote today. Actually, we can have things the way we want them. But it's up to us to make it happen.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Who is going to represent you? You need someone with power and enthusiasm. You also need someone you can trust to keep your best interests at heart. Don't go for one who's been known to say one thing and do another. If there's any wheeling and dealing, make sure it's in your favour.

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Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Learn
- Red Skelton character
- Ancient stringed instrument
- Hop
- majesty
- Arden
- Evict
- Boshi
- Depository
- Galling
- Place for a summer home
- of ethics
- Champagne word
- "A Chorus Line" song
- Family member
- Roman courtyards
- Crew member
- Raised platform, in a church
- British meat dish
- Ireland
- Jalopy
- Houston player
- Nev. rtf.
- Container, abbr.
- Landing craft, abbr.
- du Vent
- Bric-a-brac holder
- Repentant person
- Eating disorder
- Indian fish dish
- Spanish aunts
- Eastern VIP
- Bacbab, e.g.
- Old man: Ger.
- Cares for
- Back talk
- Duck

DOWN

- Shows displeasure
- Harden: var.
- Lost
- Church tribunals
- Monet
- Elves of Erin
- Detect
- Forms of music
- Live
- Growing out
- Event in the ring
- homol
- Chastity's mother
- A good investment
- Heavy, durable cordage
- Words of sympathy
- Bump into
- General Bradley
- Kind of shark
- Busy as —
- Veal
- Baseball stats
- Saud
- Flocker Adam
- Public transportation
- Hash house
- Arabian land
- Nets
- Feeds the furnace
- Between the sheets
- Influence by illegal means
- 50 Banish
- Lasso
- Artist's need
- Blind as —
- Volume
- Portent
- Emanation
- Drunk's problem, briefly

Peanuts



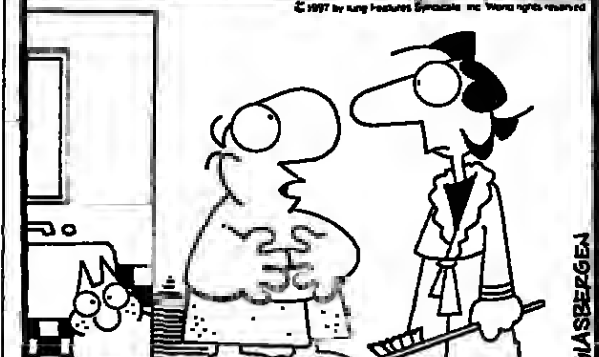
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TIARE

ENPAC

GARAVE

NATTEX

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHOKO PLAIT SAILOR MAGNET
Answer: One too many drinks caused him to do this: SLEEP TIGHT

Business

Daily

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Abdoun Real Estate

Rel: 810605-810609
Fax: 810520
Mobile: 67930007

Daily Business Deal

A review of news from the Arabic press

Saudis top list of non-Jordanians allowed to buy real estate in the Kingdom

**** A REPORT** issued by the Land and Survey Department shows that between January and August of this year, 103 approvals were given to non-Jordanians to acquire 2,907 dunums of agricultural lands in the Kingdom. Of the total, approvals were given to 13 persons from the Gaza Strip, 14 persons holding the Palestinian nationality, 12 Kuwaitis and 10 other Arab and foreign nationalities.

Saudis were given the largest areas as approvals were given to 34 Saudis to own a total of 1,320 dunums of Jordanian agricultural land. Seven persons from the United Arab Emirates came in second place as they were allowed to own 684 dunums. They were followed by the Kuwaitis who were allowed to own 245 dunums.

Gazans topped the list of non-Jordanians who acquired residential land during

the first eight months of this year as 252 Gazans were given approvals to own 168.5 dunums of residential land. Palestinians ranked in second place with 91 persons allowed to own 55.6 dunums.

In third place, 60 Saudis were given approval to buy 51.9 dunums.

As for apartments one person carrying the Swedish nationality was given approval to own 124 dunums of "apartment area." Iraqis ranked second as 64 persons were allowed to purchase 10.6 dunums of apartment area. In third place, 55 Palestinians were authorised to own 8.6 dunums of apartment area.

Overall, 927 persons carrying the nationalities of 33 Arab and foreign countries in addition to those from Gaza were allowed to own various forms of real estate in the Kingdom (Al Aswaj).

Company to build luxury 5-star tourist resort near Petra

**** JORDAN IS** to build a luxury tourist resort near the ancient, stone-carved city of Petra. A planning manager for the Jordan Tourist Investment Co. said construction will begin in January at Nawafleh village near Petra, 250 kilometres south of Amman.

Mohammad Issam Saffarini told the Associated Press the project will cost JD7

million (\$9.8 million) and should be completed by 1999. It will offer a five-star hotel, swimming pools, health spas, shopping centre and restaurants, he said.

Jordan began to expand its tourism facilities after signing the 1994 peace treaty with Israel. Revenue from tourism reached \$700 million in 1996.

Japan's Sanyo Securities goes bankrupt

TOKYO (AFP) — Sanyo Securities Co. Ltd. went bankrupt Monday with liabilities of 373.6 billion yen (\$3.1 billion), becoming Japan's largest brokerage failure since 1945.

The troubled firm, one of Japan's top 10 brokers, filed for court-backed protection from creditors under the Corporate Rehabilitation Law, the Finance Ministry said, after nine life insurance firms refused to extend loans.

"I apologise for giving trouble and worry to our shareholders and clients," Takashi Ikeuchi, president of Sanyo Securities, told a news conference.

It was the first bankruptcy of a Japanese securities house listed on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange and the 11th biggest in Japan since the end of World War II.

The company is to suspend most of its operations from Tuesday.

As Monday was a national holiday, the authorities appealed for savers and investors to remain calm when markets reopen Tuesday.

Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka told a news conference the ministry had asked major commercial banks to support Sanyo's rehabilitation.

Mr. Mitsuzuka also asked Nomura Securities Co. Ltd., a major shareholder in Sanyo, to back measures to prevent Sanyo clients from immediately cancelling contracts.

"The prime minister ordered the ministry to adopt a prudent policy to maintain order in the securities industry and protect investors," Mr. Mitsuzuka said.

"I strongly request financial institutions concerned to take appropriate and thorough measures," the finance minister said.

The ministry estimated liabilities at 373.6 billion yen. But the collapse came after nine life insurance companies last Friday turned down Sanyo requests for a further extension of the repayment deadline for 20 billion yen (\$166 million) in loans.

Sanyo, hounded by about 80 billion yen in bad loans to affiliated non-bank money-lenders, had not been in profit since 1992. It drew up a restructuring plan in 1994 under which the life insurers lent Sanyo 20 billion yen.

Under the rescue plan, Sanyo raised another 20 billion yen by allocating new shares to three main creditor banks — the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd., Nippon Credit Bank Ltd. and Daiwa Bank Ltd. — and Nomura.

Earlier this year, Sanyo said it would close units in the United States and Switzerland by March next year, and later in South Korea and China, as part of a restructuring.

Sanyo has been also operating in Britain, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. But analysts had held out little hope for Sanyo's future, its share price was at

84 yen at last Friday's close against 3,450 at its peak 10 years ago. And there had been talk in recent weeks of a merger with Kokusai Securities, another mid-sized brokerage.

Other second division brokers face similar problems.

"The shares of small and mid-sized brokers are trading at distressed levels as investors seem to think that their chances of survival in the new, deregulating financial environment are low," said James Florillo of ING Barings in a recent study on the sector.

In May, the small Ogawa Securities closed in the first move of its kind in Japan in 30 years. Seventeen of the 21 mid-sized brokers have announced losses for the first half of the year.

The companies do not have the necessary skills to offer high finance packages in a market headed for widespread deregulation under the plan launched by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

There strength has traditionally been in their networks selling shares and bonds to private customers. But the stock market has lost its attraction with the public.

On top of the problems of the mid sector, Japan's big four — Nomura Securities, Daiwa Securities, Nikko Securities and Yamaichi Securities — have all seen their reputations damaged after being implicated in illegal payments to corporate racketeers.

Jordan, Iraq sign agricultural memo

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mijhem Kheirsha returned to Amman Monday after discussing trade exchanges of farm products with Iraqi officials in Baghdad.

Mr. Kheirsha described his talks with the Iraqi officials as fruitful and successful.

"Our talks with senior Iraqi officials were aimed at bolstering bilateral cooperation between the two countries as well as promoting the trade exchange in accordance with the Jordanian-Iraqi protocol," said Mr. Kheirsha.

The minister added that he discussed with Iraq's Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh means of increasing the Jordanian-Iraqi trade by \$50 million.

"We also urged the Iraqi government to continue supplying Jordan

with its oil needs," said the minister.

Mr. Kheirsha said he signed with his Iraqi counterpart, Abdul Ilah Hamid, a memorandum of understanding in the field of agriculture.

"According to the agreement, Jordan will provide Iraq with 140,000 saplings of olive and fruit trees whereas the Iraqi government will provide Jordan with palm saplings," the minister continued.

He also said the memorandum included the exchange of technical expertise between Jordan and Iraq.

Mr. Kheirsha also met Iraq's Deputy President Taha Yassin Ramadan and reviewed with him scopes of cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

German mission finalises evaluation of GTZ standards project

AMMAN (J.T.) — The German mission from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development headed by Professor Werner Gocht, Sunday

finalised its two-week mission to Jordan.

The aim of the mission was to evaluate the GTZ project for metrology, standardisation, testing and quality management (MSTQ), which is being implemented since 1991 in close cooperation with the Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology (JISM).

The evaluation mission visited some Jordanian private companies, carried out discussions with the managers and had a look at the production processes and their quality standards.

The mission also visited some Jordanian testing and calibration laboratories preparing for international accreditation. They also met relevant Jordanian government officials. They collected data on present MSTQ services and activities.

The mission focused on the cooperation between the MSTQ project and the private industrial sector and on most needed MSTQ services taking into consideration that Jordan will join the WTO and sign the European/Jordan partnership agreement.

In light of the mission's findings, adequate recommendations will be made for the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany.

The mission got a good impression of the engagement of the JISM in the MSTQ fields and appreciated the efforts done to assist the Jordan national development.

Furthermore, the mission was impressed by the determination of the Jordan industry to produce high quality products and offer high quality services in order to reach international markets and increase exports, as this is the right way for Jordan with its limited resources to improve the quality of life for the Jordanian people.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 3/11/97 17:50										
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF	
US Dollar	-	1.7390	0.5979	1.4176	120.65	1.4039	1703.30	1.3613	5.8260	
DE Mark	0.5750	-	0.3433	0.8148	69.31	0.8067	978.79	1.3271	3.3495	
GB Sterling	1.6725	2.9114	-	2.3712	201.81	2.3480	2849.93	3.2810	9.7502	
CHF Franc	0.7054	1.2260	0.4211	-	85.02	0.9896	1200.63	1.3824	4.1045	
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4403	0.4946	1.1735	-	1.1625	14.10	162.34	4.8242	
CA Dollar	0.7123	1.2249	0.4238	0.9642	1.16	-	1201.36	1.3800	4.1019	
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0212	0.3507	0.8832	1412.43	0.8242	-	1.151	3.4206	
NL Guilder	0.5099	38.69	0.3046	72.31	61.51	0.7159	868.35	-	2.9712	
FR Franc	0.1716	0.2984	0.1025	24.3187	20.68	0.2408	33.64	33.6400	-	

Middle Eastern Currencies										
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BHD	QAR	KWD	AED	EGP		
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6400	0.3029	3.6728	1.5350	3.9900	
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2872	0.5325	5.1412	0.4278	5.1876	2.1880	4.7881	
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0808	0.98	409.29	0.9039	
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8780	9.9483	-	9.66	0.8033	9.74	4971.73	8.9923	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0632	1.01	421.70	0.9313	
Kuwait Dinar	3.3020	2.3378	12.3837	1.2448	12.02	-	12.13	5068.52	0.9313	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0206	0.9911	0.0825	-	417.94	0.9230	
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4612	2.4433	0.2456	2.3713	0.1973	2.3927	-	2.2085	
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2088	1.1063	0.1112	1.0737	0.0893	1.0834	452.80	-	

Energy		
Oil	Barrel	Previous
Brent	20.46	19.05
WTI	21.07	21.23
Bonny	20.46	19.05
Dubai	19.45	19.12
UL Gas	197.00	198.00

Mid-East Currencies										
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY					
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4639	0.15938	0.37811	32.1968					
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47378	0.16274	0.38612	32.8818					
KW Dinar	3.3020	5.74383	1.97355	4.68165	398.724					
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.61467	1.58234	3.76223	320.307					
CY Pound	1.9473	3.3881	1.1634	2.7615	235.016					

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	313.2	313.7
Silver (oz's)	4.75	4.77
Platinum (oz's)	405	407
Al (3 Months)	1626	1629
CU (3 Months)	1999	2003
Zinc (3 Months)	1259	1261
Lead (3 Months)	805	806
Ni (3 Months)	6180	6210

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)										
Period	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months					
USD	5.56	5.65	5.71	5.76	5.81					
GBP	7.12	7.34	7.43	7.25	7.53					
JPY	0.39	0.39	0.40	0.43	0.43					
DEM	3.54	3.64	3.74	3.88	3.97					
FRF	3.53	3.55	3.68	3.86	3.98					
CHF	1.78	1.81	2.06	1.87	2.15					
ITL	6.64	6.54	8.19	5.90	5.68					

Energy		
Commodity	Unit	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	148.5	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1643	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	308.6	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot
Soyab (\$/ton)	25.03	Spot
Tea (kg/box)	158	Spot
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	410	Spot

JOD Cross Rates										
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY					
US Dollar	0.708	0.710								
GB Sterling	1.1633	1.1897								
DE Mark	0.4078	0.4098								
CH Franc	0.5013	0.5038								
FR Franc	0.1217	0.1223								
JP Yen	0.5893	0.5922								
NL Guilder	0.3814	0.3832								
IT Lira	0.416	0.4161								

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHIBELIYAT										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 03/11/1997										
PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRAMS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
346,000 345,000	ARAB BANK	15.1	1.33	11	940	309385	339.35	339.00	-0.35	
3,600 3,600	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2.02	0.00	10	21433	38993	1.81	1.82	+0.01	
3,600 3,600	BANK OF JORDAN	6.2	0.00	1	200	590	2.93	2.93	-0.03	
1,190 1,190	NIO. EAST INV. SK.	73.6	0.00	13	16750	18560	1.07	1.13	+0.05	
2,600 2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. SK.	10.3	6.13	24	74100	189163	3.54	3.58	+0.04	
3,360 4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.2	0.00	9	18900	96025	5.07	5.08	+0.01	
1,050 740	JOR. GOLF BANK	4.6	8.97	3	950	741	7.79	7.79	-0.01	
3,970 3,450	ARAB JOR. INV. SK.	19.1	0.00	3	15750	62528	3.85	3.97	+0.12	
3,430 3,430	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.5	3.16	13	5283	18895	3.61	3.57	-0.04	
1,530 1,110	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	9	0.00	3	35000	30000	1.21	1.20	-0.01	
3,900 3,080	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	24.6	0.00	2	2500	9550	3.82	3.83	-	
3,900 870	SEST. AL-MAL (SESTRA)	6	16.13	17	3100	2836	0.89	0.93	+0.04	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 236.75 FCMB: 0.00										
2,050 1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.26	116	184903	777313	28535	1.89	1.90	+0.01
4,030 1,320	IRRID. ELECTRICITY	30.7	3.30	2	100	348	3.31	3.48	+0.17	
1,550 930	KATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	1	500	660	1.22	1.20	-0.02	
8,900 6,700	ALAYI	15.3	5.95	1	50	421	8.65	8.41	-0.24	
1,740 1,150	NIO. EAST INV. SK.	20.1	0.00	7	5500	7286	1.32	1.32	-	
3,900 2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.5	0.00	2	500	1815	3.68	3.63	-0.05	
3,120 2,900	ZAKIA EDUCATION	0	0.00	1	600	558	0.93	0.93	-	
2,230 1,630	UNIFIED CO.	8.2	6.36	1	250	433	1.73	1.73	-	

UEFA CUP

Crucial matches ahead for Liverpool, Aston Villa

PARIS (AFP) — English clubs Liverpool and Aston Villa, wallowing in mid-table mediocrity, face crucial home games in the UEFA Cup on Tuesday night that could end up defining their success or otherwise this season.

Liverpool, ninth in the English Premiership and with manager Roy Evans under increasing pressure, host French club Strasbourg at Anfield trailing 3-0 after the first leg of their second-round match.

Villa, in 14th spot after failing to gell since the arrival of striker Stan Collymore, host Athletic Bilbao in better shape, having snaffled a 0-0 draw in the first leg in Spain.

Liverpool, who have been decried as over-paid under-achievers by the British press, have no doubts about the size of their assignment after being thoroughly outplayed in Strasbourg.

"With three goals to make up, it's win or bust really," said manager Evans. "I think we've got to be a bit cavalier."

"We'll give it a go and if we get the early breakthrough it could be a bit interesting."

Evans is open about Liverpool's failure to live up to their undoubted potential this season — including a 1-1 draw at lowly Bolton on Saturday.

"This season we haven't really played well," Evans said. "We've only had the odd game where we've come close to playing anywhere near our potential."

One player who will be under particular scrutiny is erratic goalkeeper David James, who knows his future is on the line after Liverpool indicated their interest in United States interna-

tional Brad Friedel.

Strasbourg could only manage a 1-1 draw at home to Auxerre on Friday night, but have been in outstanding European form, including beating Glasgow Rangers in both legs in the first round.

Villa, despite the presence of three excellent strikers in Collymore, Dwight Yorke and Savo Milosevic in their ranks, have managed only one goal in three UEFA Cup outings this season.

They will have been boosted by the news that the talented but infuriatingly enigmatic midfielder Sasa Curcic has pledged his future to the club despite being in and out of the first team this season, but morale cannot have been lifted by a 2-0 home loss to Chelsea on Saturday.

Bilbao, meanwhile, won 3-0 at home to Tenerife at the weekend and are looking forward to the return to European action of influential midfielder Julien Guerrero, who missed the first leg match with a knee injury.

Strasbourg's compatriots from Lyon, who scored a 2-1 win away to Italian giants Inter Milan in the first leg, recorded a 1-0 win at home to league leaders Paris Saint Germain on Friday night and will be bubbling with confidence, although Inter maintained their lead in the Italian League with a 1-0 weekend win over Parma.

"If we play against Lyon the same way as we played against Parma, then we are capable of reversing the first-leg result," said Inter coach Gigi Simoni.

Brazilian striking ace Ronaldo suffered a bruised right cheekbone during the match against Parma, but is

rated 80 per cent likely to start in Lyon.

Auxerre, who take a 3-1 lead to OFI Crete of Greece, and Bastia, who trail 1-0 going into their home tie against Steaua Bucharest of Romania, both have realistic chances of advancing.

Bastia will be boosted by the return of captain Patrick Moreau and midfielder Cyril Rool, both of whom were suspended for the away leg.

Not so the fifth French representatives, Metz — who crashed to a 2-0 home first-leg defeat against Karlsruhe and have injured attacker Bruno Rodriguez a doubtful starter, even though they are trying to maintain a positive attitude.

"When it comes to a European competition anything is possible," said star forward Robert Pires. "If we don't believe in ourselves there is no point going there."

Thomas Hassler, who scored both first-leg goals from free-kicks, was on target again at the weekend, grabbing a brace in a 3-1 league win over Cologne.

Karlsruhe's fellow Germans, the defending champions of Schalke 04, are in a perilous position, having had to settle for a 1-0 win at home to Belgian side Anderlecht in the first leg.

Two sides virtually certain of progressing to the last 16 are Sporting Braga of Portugal and Atletico Madrid of Spain.

Braga trounced Dinamo Tbilisi of Georgia 4-1 in the first leg, while Atletico, inspired by a hat-trick from Italian sensation Christian Vieri, downed PAOK Salonika of Greece 5-2.

S. Korea promises victory over UAE

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean players promised Monday to return home with a victory in their last Asia Group B match against United Arab Emirates (UAE) after their humiliating week-end defeat by arch-rival Japan.

"After having watched the UAE-Uzbekistan match, I am confident that South Korea can win," head coach Cha Bum-Kun told reporters at Seoul's Kimpo Airport.

"I will bring back a victory for our fans," he said.

South Korea will play UAE which is desperate for a win to secure a place at the World Cup in France next year.

After Japan beat South Korea 2-0 Saturday, and UAE were held to 0-0 by Uzbekistan on Sunday, Japan moved a point clear of UAE and a step closer to realising their dream of playing in France.

South Korea and Japan will be co-hosting the 2002 World Cup and Japan does not want to be the only nation to host the games without ever having played in one.

South Korea, who have already clinched a ticket to next year's finals, play UAE on November 9. Japan plays bottom of the table Kazakhstan on November 8.



Chicago Bears' Ron Cox breaks up a pass intended for Washington Redskins' Jamie Asher (L) during the third quarter of their NFL game at Soldier Field. The Redskins defeated the Bears 31-8 (Reuters photo)

Niners make it eight straight

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — The San Francisco 49ers grabbed their eighth straight victory on Sunday, a 17-10 win over the faltering and frustrated Dallas Cowboys.

Garrison Hearst ran for 104 yards and a touchdown and Tim McDonald's interception with 37 seconds remaining sealed San Francisco's win.

"We were tested and it was a tremendous game, a game that could have gone either way," 49ers coach Steve Mariucci said of the matchup between the National Conference rivals. "Two very capable teams slugging it out and playing as hard as they can. It was a playoff-type atmosphere. We are not where we are going to be. We are trying to improve throughout the season and peak at the end."

The Cowboys, who fell to 4-5, had a chance to tie the game in the final minute and looked poised to force overtime when Michael Irvin drew what appeared to be a pass interference penalty on cornerback Rod Woodson. But despite contact between Woodson, who was clearly beaten, and Irvin, the official ruled no penalty occurred even after a flag was thrown.

"I don't want to complain but I have a problem with a judgement call," Irvin said. "One ref said I've got tripping, another ref said we got our feet tangled up."

"Officials are a human part of the game. Sometimes they make the right call and sometimes they make the wrong call," Woodson said. "I think he made the right call. Eight-yard passes are not going to beat our defenses."

The no-call proved costly when, after a procedure penalty, Troy Aikman threw his second interception of the game. McDonald, who had 10 tackles in the contest, made a diving catch at the San Francisco 44-yard line, sealing the victory for the 49ers (8-1).

"We took the lead and our defence said, 'they have the ball but they can't win if they don't score,'" said McDonald. "We were

guarding against a touchdown on that last drive so we gave some things up."

Aikman, who returned after missing half of last week's game against the Philadelphia Eagles with a concussion, completed 22-of-36 passes for 218 yards. But Dallas was without ground threat Emmitt Smith, who left the game late in the first half with a groin injury and did not return.

"I'm as frustrated as anyone else," said Aikman. "We just have to continue to fight."

Steve Young was 15-of-23 for 180 yards for the Niners, who have beaten just one team with a winning record this season. Hearst carried 22 times en route to his sixth career 100-yard game. Terrell Owens, Iheanyi Uweazueke and William Floyd added three receptions apiece.

Denver maintained their lead in the AFC West and kept pace with the 49ers for the best record in the league with a 30-27 victory over Seattle.

John Elway threw for 252 yards and two touchdowns, moving 16 yards ahead of Fran Tarkenton and into second place on the all-time passing yardage list with 47,019. Miami's Dan Marino is the all-time leader with 53,710 yards.

Mario's Dolphins and the New England Patriots both lost to give the New York Jets sole possession of first place in the American Conference East for the first time in 11 years.

John Hall's fourth field goal, a 37-yarder 4:58 into overtime, gave the Jets a

19-16 win over the Baltimore Ravens.

The Jets improved to 6-3 and are at the top of the division for the first time since Week 12 of the 1986 season.

The Dolphins, who lost Marino to a sprained ankle to start the second half, fell 9-6 to Buffalo.

The Minnesota Vikings turned back the faltering Patriots 23-18. Moe Williams, filling in for injured running back Robert Smith, had a huge first quarter and Brad Johnson sealed the game with a 23-yard touchdown pass.

The Vikings remained tied for the lead in the NFC Central with Green Bay, who beat Detroit 20-10.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers needed a 36-yard field goal with eight seconds left to escape with a 31-28 victory over the Indianapolis Colts, the only winless team left in the league.

The Carolina Panthers, starting to show the form that took them to last year's NFC Championship Game, defeated Oakland 38-14.

The Cincinnati Bengals snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 38-31 victory over the San Diego Chargers, and the Atlanta Falcons earned a wild 34-31 win over the St. Louis Rams on Monday.

Andersen's 27-yard field goal with two seconds left. The Washington Redskins beat the Chicago Bears for the fifth straight time, 31-8. The Jacksonville Jaguars defeated the Tennessee Oilers 30-24 and Arizona beat Philadelphia 31-21.

RESULTS

Atlanta	34	St Louis	31
Buffalo	9	Miami	6
Carolina	38	Oakland	14
Washington	31	Chicago	8
Cincinnati	38	San Diego	31
Tampa Bay	31	Indianapolis	28
Minnesota	23	New England	18
NY Jets	19	Baltimore	16 (OT)
Arizona	31	Philadelphia	21
Denver	30	Seattle	27
San Francisco	17	Dallas	10
Jacksonville	30	Tennessee	24
Green Bay	20	Detroit	10

Official says tennis attendance dropping

PARIS (AFP) — Patrice Clerc, the director of the \$2.5 million Paris Indoor Open, has said that tennis should take a leaf out of football and invent a series of "Champions' League" events to stimulate renewed interest in the sport.

Clerc, who revealed that attendance at major indoor tournaments in 1997 had been falling by up to 30 per cent, admitted that the Paris tournament had also suffered a drop.

This year only 72,600 spectators came through the doors of the ultra-modern grass-walled stadium to the south-east of Paris — compared to 81,716 last year and 82,696 in 1995.

The tournament, which has just celebrated its 12th year, peaked in 1990 when 97,679 fans came through the turnstiles.

"Our tournament is down by about ten per cent," admitted Clerc. "But that isn't so bad if you compare it with other events."

"One of the problems is that the Paris Open is staged in one of the biggest stadiums on the tour with a 15,000 capacity."

Consequently there probably appear to be more empty spaces than elsewhere.

Clerc emphasised that in Stuttgart, where a similar "Super Nine" tournament is staged the week before the players arrived in Paris, the stadium accommodated only 8,000 people.

"I don't think we should panic or become too alarmed about the falling off in attendance," he said, adding: "But it is obviously something we have to look into."

Clerc said he didn't think there was any single cause for the falling off in the number of spectators. It had probably been due to several different things... the way the holidays fell during the tournament this year... the general economic climate... the good weather...

Although he advocated changes, he said he did not think the quality of the tennis could be faulted.

"We have seen some marvellous tennis in Paris this week. Our young French wild-card entries produced good results and there was a lot of excitement," said Clerc.

"But it is true that a few years ago, a

match between Pete Sampras and Boris Becker would have filled the stadium whereas this year there were empty seats when they met in the second-round."

Clerc said there were "too many tournaments" in the season and said players should not play more than 14 tournaments a year. Many were now playing 20 or 21.

He also agreed that there was an element of monotony creeping in to the game and he agreed with the analysis of Boris Becker, who earlier in the week had complained that the code of conduct was being too strictly interpreted and that players were becoming "machines" who could no longer express their feelings on court.

"Obviously we need to strike a happy medium between two extremes," he said. "But I think we have gone too far the other way."

Asked if he had a solution to the plunging audiences, Clerc said that he thought a kind of "Champions' League" — a series of elite tournaments with fewer players taking part — could be the answer.

"I don't know what form these events should take — or whether they should be 'mixed' or not — but something must be done to stimulate public interest."

Clerc was adamant, however, that the answer did not lie in trying to duplicate the Grand Slam events.

"The Grand Slam tournaments are for tennis what the World Cup is for football," he said.

"They must keep their unique format. What we need is perhaps something like the Champions' League."

Clerc said he was sure all these matters would be discussed at the highest levels in the coming months.

'We'll be the champions' — Ronaldo

MILAN (AFP) — Ronaldo claimed on Monday that Inter Milan are looking even more like Italian champions after their decisive victory over title rivals Parma.

The 21-year-old Brazilian fired a home superb free-kick to earn his side's 1-0 victory on Saturday, and now believes that Inter are well and truly on track for the title.

"I have honestly believed right from the start that Inter can do it, and obviously that's still the way I think," Ronaldo said. "In fact, if anything, I believe in it even more."

Thoughts here are already turning to January 4, when Inter host reigning champions Juventus in a match that will reveal much about both team's chances of winning the "Scudetto" at the end of the season.

"Of course Juventus are a good team, and of course they are fighting for the league title, but it seems to me a bit early to say that it's just down to the two of us," Ronaldo said.

"It's not too early to say they are a strong side with a lot of great champions."

"But it strikes me that the same thing was also being said of Parma and (on Saturday) it wasn't that Parma played badly but that Inter played very well, better than usual."

Ronaldo's free-kick was certainly better than usual. Parma goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, who kept Italy's World Cup hopes alive last week in Moscow, barely moved for the ball.

"I've never scored from a free-kick like that, with a ball that turns in the air — even though I've tried to do it many times in training," the Brazilian admitted.

"But there's a first time for everything and that was certainly a wonderful first time."

The only sour note of the weekend was the blow on the cheek which Ronaldo took in an aerial collision with Parma's French defender Lilian Thuram.

The bruising will not keep him out of their UEFA Cup tie in Lyon, but it comes after Napoli's Argentine defender Robert Ayala gave him a nasty kick early in their league match last month.

"I don't think he did it deliberately," Ronaldo said of Thuram's blow.

But he added: "It can't go on like this. I can't take a knock like that in every match."

Ronaldo is convinced Inter can turn around their 2-1 defeat to Lyon at San Siro, when they face the French side on Tuesday night.

"I'll be there," he said. "I feel a lot better than I did. I've just got a bit of a headache."

"But I can't miss this match — we can still qualify. There's no doubt about it."

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Wesley Snipes & Patrick Swayze ... in

TO WONG FOO

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

007 GOLDEN EYE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 699238

PLAZA

Van Damme... in

DOUBLE TEAM

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1" Sylvester Stallone & Brigitte Nielsen ... in

COBRA

(12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30)

CONCORD "2" Alec Baldwin & Kim Basinger ... in

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Shows: 3:30, 5:45 only

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN Walt Disney's

HERCULES

Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00

CON AIR

Shows: 8:30, 10:45

CINEMA TEL: 079 33430

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN

SCREAM

Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 625155

Hisham Yanes Theatre

Watch out for the new play

THE GOVERNMENT

IN THE SERVICE

OF PEOPLE

Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas

AC Milan end the misery; PSG keep lead

PARIS (AFP) — George Weah ended AC Milan's season of misery on Sunday with two goals in a 3-0 win over nine-man Sampdoria while Espanyol moved into second place in the Spanish First Division behind city rivals Barcelona by beating Salamanca 3-0.

Thierry Moreau and Joel Tchei scored first-half goals to help Toulouse hold Bordeaux 2-2 — a result which wrecked the visitors' hopes of moving level with Paris Saint Germain at the top of the table.

And in Germany Bayern Munich wasted a golden opportunity to close on runaway Bundesliga leaders Kaiserslautern when they were held to a 2-2 draw by local rivals 1860 Munich. Kaiserslautern had opened a five-point lead, also with a 2-2 draw, away to European champions Borussia Dortmund 24 hours earlier. A string of chances went begging in the first half for AC Milan and it looked as if two months of suffering, much of which has been spent hovering above the relegation zone, was destined to continue.

But the match changed suddenly when Sampdoria lost key Yugoslav midfielder Sinisa Mihajlovic for a second bookable offence in the 67th minute. Weah promptly broke the deadlock in the 74th minute, diverting Demetrio Albertini's low, inaccurate shot into the net, and then added another in 80th, skillfully rounding the keeper before slotting home.

German defender Christian Ziege scored the third with his first goal in Italy, a fine 20-yard drive after a neat pass from France's Ibrahim Ba. And Sampdoria finished a miserable day with nine men after defender Emanuele Pesaresi was given his marching orders in injury time.

But if Weah's goals brought some much-needed relief to Milan — the real hero of the day in Serie A was Bologna's Roberto Baggio. Baggio scored a hat-trick in Bologna's stunning 5-1 home victory over Napoli.

After a nightmare start, the Dall'Ara stadium fans were treated to a pulsating finish which saw Napoli miss a late penalty for 2-2 and Bologna score three goals in injury time. Bologna looked ready for defeat number four after Napoli's Roberto Goretzi scored in the 13th minute, and there were angry fans whistling at the break. But there were roars of delight within three minutes of the re-start, when Baggio converted a penalty after the former World Cup star was felled by Giuseppe Giannini.

Sweden's Kennet Andersson made it 2-1 in the 56th minute, but Bologna looked set to miss out on their first win of the season when Claudio Bellucci stepped up to take an 80th minute penalty.

However, Bellucci missed and Baggio scored two more for Bologna, including another penalty, while Andersson bagged his second of the day after a superb defence-splitting from Baggio.

Elsewhere Andersson's compatriot Klas Inngesson was on target as Bari swept to a 3-2 victory over another newly-promoted club, Empoli.

Inngesson converted a 22nd-minute penalty and South African striker Phil Masinga scored twice in the second half before a late rally from Empoli.

Daniel Dichio, the former Queens Park Rangers striker, guided Lecce to a 2-0 victory on his debut against Brescia. The former Loftus Road favourite scored in the first minute of the second half. Stefano Casale headed the ball down and Dichio swivelled round to lash it home waist-high. Casale scored



Bordeaux soccer player Johan Micoud (R) fights for the ball with Toulouse player Eric Taborda (L) during their French soccer league match at Toulouse, southern France (Reuters photo)

the second. Sunday's action came after leaders Inter Milan had beaten Parma 1-0 at San Siro to stay two points ahead of Juventus, who came back from a goal down to beat Udinese 4-1. Lazio moved into fifth place after needing only 10 men to beat AS Roma 3-1 at the Olympic stadium on Saturday night.

Two goals in three minutes from Juan Ensaider on the hour mark sealed victory for Espanyol after Frenchman Nicolas Ouedec had opened the scoring 18 minutes into the first-half.

Espanyol now have 19 points, six behind Barcelona, who were still celebrating their stunning 3-2 win at bitter rivals Real Madrid.

Real slipped to third on 18 points, ahead of Celta Vigo only on goal difference. Celta beat visiting Sporting Gijon 1-0 on Sunday.

Elsewhere Compostella won 3-1 at home to Racing Santander and Real Zaragoza played out a goalless draw with visitors Real Sociedad.

Bordeaux, who had skipper Michel Pavon sent off on the hour, came back after trailing 0-2 at half-time to force the draw with second-half goals from Lilian Laslandes.

Paris St Germain stay two points clear at the top and three points clear of Metz and Marseille despite losing 1-0 at Lyon.

Meiz drew 1-1 away to Lens thanks to an opportunistic equaliser just before halftime from Robert Pires, while resurgent Marseille won 2-0 at home to struggling Cannes thanks to two goals in the first-half from brothers Laurent and Serge Blanc.

In the only other match played Sunday, Montpellier scored their fourth straight victory when they downed Rennes 2-0.

Herve Aicarte put the home side in front with a 37th-minute penalty and Ivory Coast international Ibrahim Bakayoko rounded off the scoring in the 72nd minute with his sixth goal of the season — a close-range drive.

Montpellier dominated the match from start to finish against a lacklustre Rennes team who seemed to accept their fate.

In Germany Bayern Munich, unbeaten in 12 matches, were slow out of the blocks and conceded a ninth-minute goal to Horst Heldt, the smallest man on the field.

Dieter Hamman equalised in the 35th but Bernhard Winckler restored 1860's lead in the 52nd minute before Mario Basler made it 2-2 90 seconds later.

Bayern finished with 10 men after Sammy Kufour was sent off in the 68th

minute for a foul — a decision that sparked an outburst from Bayern president Franz Beckenbauer.

Two goals in the first half hour were not enough for Dortmund to keep Kaiserslautern at bay with Olaf Marschall bagging a pair of his own to seal a draw and take his season's tally to 13.

Struggling Dortmund's problems were compounded when defensive kingpin Juergen Kohler strained ligaments in a knee. He may need a break of several weeks and will certainly miss next Wednesday's European Champions' League clash against Parma. Striker Heiko Herrlich is also doubtful after suffering concussion.

Hertha Berlin boosted their chances of avoiding relegation with an unlikely 2-0 win away to Werder Bremen — their first away victory of the season.

On the verge of being sacked 12 days ago, Berlin coach Juergen Roever is suddenly back in the driver's seat after an early own-goal by Bremen libero Bernhard Trares and an 88th-minute header by Michael Preetz helped Hertha extend Bremen's goalless spell to 375 minutes.

Two classic goals by Thomas Hassler helped Karlsruhe to a 3-1 victory over Cologne, who have now settled in for a struggle in the Bundesliga's basement.

Hassler cracked home a magical volley, shot from 30 yards in the 67th minute to nullify a Cologne goal just before half-time from Toni Polster.

In the 90th minute Hassler pulled off another of his famous free-kicks, which looped over the Cologne wall and caught goalkeeper Andreas Menger totally by surprise.

Karlsruhe can now look to next Tuesday's UEFA Cup second-leg match against FC Metz with confidence — a confidence that can be shared by Bayer Leverkusen when they play Benfica in the Champions' League on Wednesday on the back of a 2-1 win over Wolfsburg.

In the absence of injured playmaker Krasimir Balakov, Stuttgart were dismal in their 0-0 draw with third-placed Schalke.

Bochum, who fought their way to a 2-2 draw in Rostock and face strong Belgian side FC Brugge Tuesday in the UEFA Cup, extended their disastrous Bundesliga away record to 10 consecutive matches without a win.

In an extraordinary match on Friday night, a 5-4 goal feast in Borussia Moenchengladbach's favour against Duisburg probably saved coach Hannes Bongartz from the chop.

Queen Elizabeth bids for Melbourne Cup with Arabian Story

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II will bid for Australia's greatest horse race, the Melbourne Cup, with her five-year-old galloper Arabian Story at Flemington racecourse here Tuesday.

The A\$2.2 million (\$1.54 million) race has only been won once before by an overseas-trained horse, Ireland's Vintage Crop in 1993, and bookmakers are lukewarm about Arabian Story's chances, listing him at 16-1 behind 4-1 favourite Might and Power.

Arabian Story, trained by Lord Huntingdon, is out of American stallion Sharrood from the English mare, Once Upon A Time, and is considered a moderate performer in Europe.

He will be ridden by the British-based glamour Italian jockey Frankie Dettori.

Another British entrant is Harbour Dues, a five-year-old galloper trained by Lady Anne Harries, the daughter of the 16th Duke of Norfolk and wife of the former England cricket captain Lord Cowdrey.

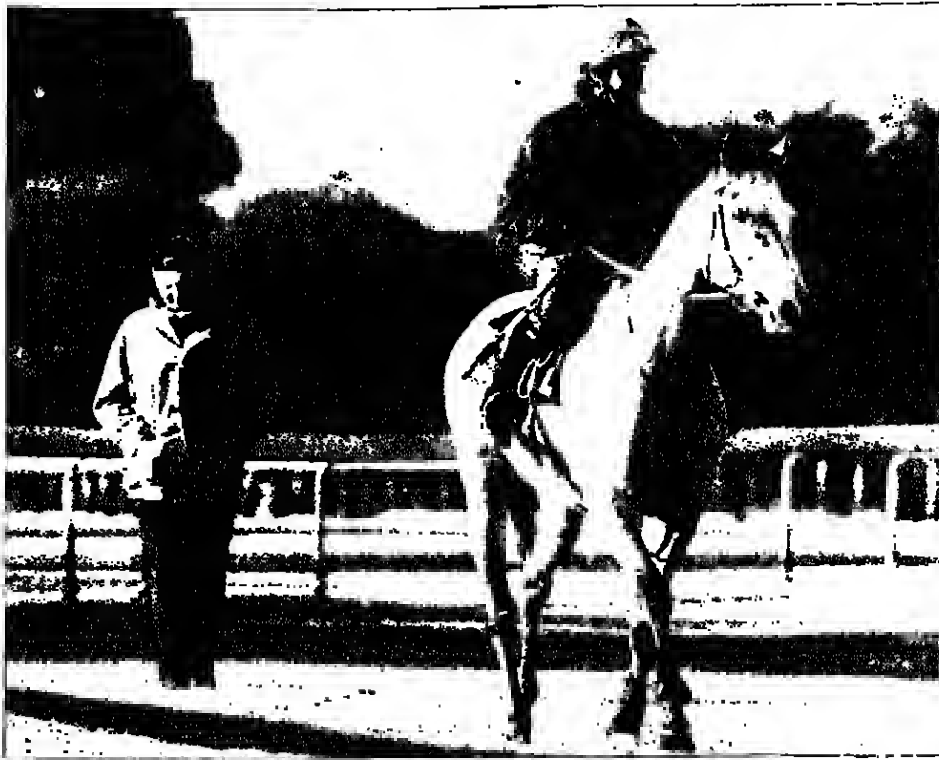
Harbour Dues, an level weights with Arabian Story at 53.5 kilograms, is rated a 33-1 shot.

Neither horse is in the class of previous English and Irish challengers, but they are supposed to be improvers, and tougher and more durable than most of their predecessors.

Top Australian trainer Bart Cummings is striving for his 11th win in the 3,200-metre Cup with his two starters in Tuesday's race, Alfa (12-1) and Grandmaster (25-1).

Cummings said Alfa had improved since last week's weight-for-age Cox Plate and could not be any better going into the Melbourne Cup.

Might and Power, the runaway Caulfield Cup winner a fortnight ago, remains a firm favourite at 4-1 ahead of the 1995 winner Doremus at 6-1, with Ebony Grove coming in from 10-1 despite drawing the outside barrier in the 22-horse field.



English Melbourne Cup hopeful Arabian Story ridden by track rider Andy Hopkins (R) and owned by Queen Elizabeth II is followed by trainer Lord Huntingdon after early morning work at Melbourne's Sandown race course in preparation for the Melbourne Cup. The Melbourne Cup which runs on November 4 is Australia's richest horse race (Reuters photo)

Knicks, Celtics lose

BOSTON (AP) — Anfernee Hardaway scored 32 points, including six 3-pointers, and the Orlando Magic gave Chuck Daly his first win after a three-year break from coaching by beating the Boston Celtics 107-96 Sunday night.

The Magic scored the first seven points and led by at least five the rest of the way as Rick Pitino suffered his first loss as Boston's coach following Friday night's stunning 92-85 win over the Chicago Bulls in his debut.

On Sunday, Derek Harper added 19 and Nick Anderson 13 for the Magic. The Celtics were led by rookie Ron Mercer with 23 points and Antoine Walker with 19.

Rockets 93, Kings 77: In Sacramento, California, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 18 points and Houston held Sacramento to just seven points in the fourth quarter as the Rockets beat the Kings.

Trailing 74-71 early in the fourth quarter, the Rockets used 3-pointers by Eddie Johnson and Brent Price to take the lead for good with an 8-0 run. Houston scored the game's final 12 points, while Sacramento didn't score in the final 5:09.

Kevin Willis had 16 points for Houston and Charles Barkley had 15 points and 14 rebounds.

Mitch Richmond, held scoreless in the fourth quarter, finished with 21 points for Sacramento.

Pistons 94, Knicks 86: In New York, Grant Hill was a one-man show in the fourth quarter until Lindsey Hunter took over in the final two minutes as the Detroit Pistons spoiled New York's home opener.

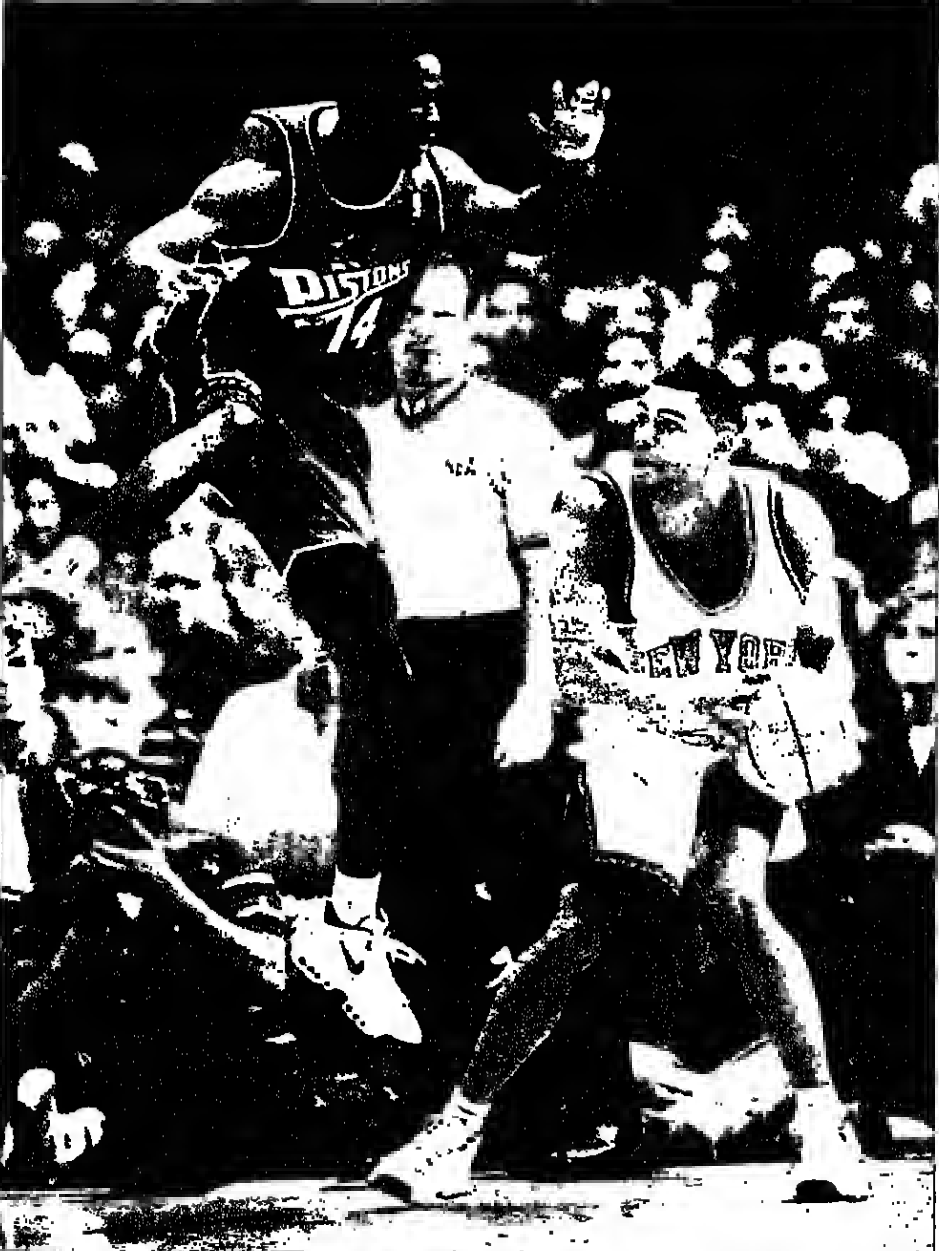
Hill scored 15 of his 34 points in the final period and Hunter had 23, including nine in the final two minutes.

Hill also had nine rebounds, five assists and three steals, and Hunter had five steals and six rebounds as the Pistons stayed undefeated after two games.

Patrick Ewing and Larry Johnson scored 16 apiece for New York, which couldn't find anybody in the fourth quarter to adequately defend Hill or Hunter.

RESULTS

Detroit	94	New York	86
Orlando	107	Washington	96
Houston	93	Sacramento	77



New York Knicks guard Allan Houston looks for help as Detroit Pistons guard Mallik Sealy (L) tries to intimidate him with a leaping defence in the first period of their NBA game (Reuters photo)

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A YAMNAN HUSSEIN

OH, THOSE SPOTS

East-West vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ Q74
♥ A Q J
♦ A Q 8 2
♣ A J 8

WEST
♠ J 5 2
♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ 9 8 2
♣ Q 10 4

SOUTH
♠ A 8 3
♥ 7 4
♦ K J 7 5
♣ 8 7 5 2

The bidding:
EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
Pass Pass Pass 10
1NT 1NT Pass Pass
Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♣

It is impossible to overstate the value of spotcards. This hand, from the 1964 Polish Junior Mixed Pairs event, illustrates this phenomenon. North was a bit short of a two-no-trump opening bid. East tried to get both major suits into the auction with the takeout double, but South's one no trump served its purpose, shutting West out. North's jump to game would pass the most rigorous scrutiny.

West found the inspired lead of a

low heart. East captured the jack with the king and continued the suit to the queen. There were eight fast tricks, and the obvious try for a ninth, a spade to the queen, was almost surely doomed — East's takeout double surely placed that defender with the king. Declarer decided that the club suit offered a more promising source for a ninth trick. Not only might the suit be developed for an extra trick, but there was also the possibility of an endplay.

After crossing to hand with the jack of diamonds, declarer led a low club. Had West followed low, declarer intended inserting the six. As the cards lie, that would have forced the king and a finesse of the jack next would have produced the fulfilling trick. West put in the nine, however, but that proved no better.

Dummy's jack lost to the king, and the heart suit was cleared.

Declarer came to hand with the king of diamonds to lead another club, and West was forced to insert the ten, taken by the ace. The club six forced out the queen, and declarer's ninth of clubs was now established, while the ace of spades served as the entry to enjoy the winner.

Double dummy, it is easy to make game on other lines, but would you have done so at the table?

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Jordan urges IATA to improve safety standards, protect small carriers

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal on Monday called on the international air transport community to help improve flight safety standards worldwide and to reduce aviation accidents.

In a speech delivered to representatives of 140 airlines at the opening ceremony of the 53rd international IATA conference, Prince Faisal urged them to help small and medium size airlines that are facing tough competition from large companies as a result of aviation deregulation.

"The new winds of change brought about fresh concepts of liberalisation, privatisation, ease of market entry, foreign ownership, formation of alliances and mergers," the Prince told the two-day meeting that he opened on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein, who received the participants at the Royal Court following the inauguration ceremony.

"These concepts gained momentum across the world and were reinforced by the tide of globalisation of the world economy and integra-

tion of markets, which has been flowing in the direction of internationalism," he added.

Prince Faisal said that many large airlines have responded by restructuring themselves to improve their competitiveness and improve operation efficiency and productivity.

"At the same time it dawned on governments throughout the world that they can no longer extend unqualified support and protection to their national carriers in the face of increasing competition, and that those carriers should be able to operate on purely commercial basis... this meant that state interference had to be stopped," the Prince emphasised, alluding to the experience of the national carrier, Royal Jordanian.

He said that the trend towards liberalisation has created confusion among small and medium size airlines that found themselves under strong competitive pressure.

"By virtue of their size and operating efficiency, large airlines were offering their services at considerable cost advantages" which led "to squeezing competitors

through increased frequencies and reduced prices," the Prince said.

He said that the question now for small and medium size airlines is how to accommodate the new situation and survive, adding that they face the option of merger with large airlines to make benefit from the advantages.

The merger, Prince Faisal said, would enhance safety and assist in developing the industry standards and "promoting safe, secure and environmentally friendly air services."

"Safety is the responsibility of all involved in air transportation: manufacturers, airlines, civil and international regulatory authorities. We encourage all members to be open and cooperate in the free exchange of safety information," the Prince added.

IATA President Pierre Jeannot told the opening session that alliances between airlines have gained momentum.

"The alliance process has been very dynamic. We see a strengthening of some alliances, a wedding-out of other, but in general there is a greater determination to make alliances more productive," Mr. Jeannot told repre-

sentatives of 140 airlines.

"In recent years alliances have made a significant contribution to the airlines' efforts to simultaneously increase revenue and reduce costs," he added.

President of the Royal Jordanian Nader Dahabi, who chaired the opening session, told the meeting that Jordan was heading towards free trade, liberalisation, open skies and privatisation.

"We meet at a time where most of us are restructuring our airlines while at the same time striving to reduce costs, improve revenues in the face of tougher competition and declining yields," Mr. Dahabi said.

"Here in Jordan, the drive towards free trade, liberalisation, open skies and privatisation has moved us into new directions. While this is taking place, Royal Jordanian itself is moving steadily towards privatisation," he added.

Mr. Dahabi told reporters that among the issues that will be discussed in the IATA meeting is safety measures of the airlines as a result of aviation accidents.

Among the proposal that would be made to the airlines during the meeting is the



His Majesty King Hussein talks with International Air Transport Association (IATA) Director General Pierre Jeannot at the Royal Palace Monday. The group opened an annual meeting on Monday hampered by the fear that with traffic projected to double by the year 2010, major jet crashes could increase to an average rate of one a week (Reuters photo)

extensive training of the flight crews, supply of high technology equipment, recruitment of maintenance personnel and improvement of technical assistance, the

RJ president said.

Also to be discussed is facilitating the movement of passengers at airports through the easing of customs procedures and security

landing at these airports. Mr. Dahabi said. The last issue on the agenda is the leasing of planes and how to facilitate it among the airlines, he added.

Clinton refuses to meet Netanyahu unless progress in peace talks — radio

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton will refuse to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when the Israeli prime minister visits the United States later this month unless Israeli-Palestinian talks in Washington this week yield real progress, Israel radio reported Monday.

The radio said Mr. Netanyahu's office had confirmed the prime minister will be in the U.S. from Nov. 16 to 18, but has no plans to visit Washington and has been unable to arrange a hoped-for meeting with President Clinton.

"We were told by the Americans that such a meeting depended on progress in the peace talks," a source in Mr. Netanyahu's office told the radio.

The radio said Mr. Netanyahu's foreign tour would begin in London on Nov. 12.

The Israeli leader is sched-

uled to meet with Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Jewish leaders during his four-day stay in Britain, the radio said.

A spokesman for the prime minister confirmed the outlines of Mr. Netanyahu's itinerary as given by the radio, but said the official schedule for his U.S. and Britain visits would not be finalised before the end of the week.

Mr. Netanyahu has been trying for weeks to organise a meeting with President Clinton during the U.S. visit, organised around a major meeting of U.S. Jewish leaders Nov. 16-17 in Indianapolis.

Mr. Netanyahu is then scheduled to pay his first visit as prime minister to Los Angeles, which has a large and influential Jewish community.

Israeli press reports last week said Mr. Netanyahu could meet the American president while in California.

But the sources quoted by the radio Monday said Washington was keeping any such encounter conditional on the outcome of talks beginning Monday in Rosslyn, Virginia, between senior Israeli and Palestinian officials under the mediation of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

If President Clinton refuses to meet with Mr. Netanyahu, it would be the first time since the peace process was launched that an Israeli prime minister has visited the U.S. without seeing the president.

The meetings near Washington this week between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian National Authority negotiator Mahmoud Abbas appear unlikely to achieve significant results as the two sides headed into the talks with very different agendas.

The talks as arranged by Ms. Albright a month ago were to focus on Palestinian and U.S. demands that Israel freeze

Jewish settlement building in occupied territories and on overdue Israeli troop withdrawals from Palestinian areas.

But Israel has said it is not ready to yield significantly on either matter and wants the talks instead to focus on side-issues left over from interim peace accords like an agreement on the opening of a Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli political commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in the Haaretz newspaper Monday that Mr. Netanyahu is standing up to U.S. demands in the belief he has enough leverage with Congress via the U.S. Jewish lobby to fight pressure from President Clinton in the peace talks. But Mr. Schiff said Mr. Netanyahu was unlikely to win such a confrontation since "Netanyahu's senators will not defeat the administration's senators if the dispute concerns Israel's continued suspension of the peace process."

The talks to be mediated by the Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross were called to explore formulas that could pave the way for accelerated negotiations on a final Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement.

But the sides have put forward conditions for those negotiations that appear almost certain to scuttle the effort, which coincides with a U.S. drive to ensure Arab participation at the Nov. 16 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic

Israeli-Palestinian talks open amid little hope of results

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright opened talks Monday between senior Israeli and Palestinian envoys to pull the peace process out of gridlock but U.S. officials were not expecting any major breakthrough.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) negotiator Mahmoud Abbas joined Ms. Albright at the State Department's Treaty Room to pose for cameras ahead of the meetings.

Following a brief discussion with the secretary of state, the envoys were to cross the Potomac River to Rosslyn, Virginia to continue discussions at an institute for diplomats, the National Foreign Affairs Training Centre.

The talks to be mediated by the Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross were called to explore formulas that could pave the way for accelerated negotiations on a final Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement.

But the sides have put forward conditions for those negotiations that appear almost certain to scuttle the effort, which coincides with a U.S. drive to ensure Arab participation at the Nov. 16 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic

conference in Doha. "They're coming here with totally different agendas," a State Department official acknowledged Monday.

The State Department had said it expected the meetings to last several days but officials did not rule out the possibility on Monday that the talks could end earlier.

In Gaza City, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat asserted in a newspaper report that he saw "no chance of success" for the talks and complained that Mr. Levy did not have the necessary authority from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to negotiate.

"I am not optimistic," President Arafat told the Israeli newspaper Maariv. PNA negotiator Abbas accompanied by chief negotiator Saeb Erekat made no remarks as he arrived at the State Department.

But Mr. Levy sounded upbeat, saying, "We have come here optimistic and determined to work in order to resolve the issues and make progress together."

For accelerated peace talks to go forward, the PNA is demanding that Israel agree to a freeze on settlement construction and implement long-overdue troop withdrawals from the West Bank. Israel is reportedly pre-

pared to offer a temporary suspension on settlement activity in exchange for a halt in the pull-outs that were negotiated under previous accords.

The U.S., however, has said that Israel must uphold previous agreements on troop withdrawals even as plans for the final negotiations are being thrashed out.

In the absence of progress on substantive matters, Israel and the PNA may announce agreement on other issues of less importance such as the opening of a Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip.

For Washington, the meeting will underscore that Israel remains engaged in the peace process with the PNA as Arab capitals ponder whether to dispatch their foreign ministers to the conference in Doha less than two weeks away.

Arab governments have threatened to boycott the conference or to send low-level representation to the meeting unless Israel shows its commitment to the peace process.

Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk began a tour of Gulf countries over the weekend to try to secure high-level participation at the conference, which Israel plans to attend.

U.S. carrier in Israel as tension with Iraq mounts

TEL AVIV (AP) — A U.S. aircraft carrier and other U.S. warships docked in the Israeli port of Haifa Monday as tensions mounted between the United States and Iraq over U.N. weapons inspection.

The U.S. has warned Iraq against making good on threats to expel American members of the U.N. inspection teams in Iraq.

The USS George Washington, an aircraft carrier, and other ships of the sixth fleet arrived in the Israeli port of Haifa for what U.S. officials said was a routine recreation visit.

A diplomatic official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the visit had nothing to do with events in the region. The official said he did not think the arrival of the U.S. aircraft carrier was a hint to the Iraqi government because officials in Washington have been making the U.S. position quite clear.

The visit of the USS Washington came two days after the top American general in the region said his forces were monitoring the situation with Iraq and were ready to take action if necessary.

"The situation in the Gulf is tense even now. The possibility that operations could be conducted in our region is very real," said General Anthony Zinni as his forces concluded manoeuvres in

Egypt with troops, ships and aircraft from Egypt and European countries.

Iraq has ordered all American citizens in the U.N. inspection team searching for nuclear, chemical or biological weapons in Iraq to leave its territory.

The U.N. has warned Iraq of "serious consequences" if it does not revoke its decision. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has refused to back down, saying the American inspectors must leave by Wednesday.

The inspectors have been trying to verify that Iraq has eliminated all its weapons of mass destruction, a move that Baghdad must complete before the Security Council will consider lifting the economic sanctions imposed after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

During the 1990 Gulf war, Israeli cities were bombarded by Iraq with Scud missiles. At the time, Israeli military authorities feared that the missiles might be armed with chemical warheads and distributed gas masks to most Israeli citizens.

Since the current crisis between Iraq and the United States began, there has been a sharp increase in the number of Israelis exchanging their old gas mask kits — complete with syringes containing antidotes for nerve gas — for new ones.



Crewmen of the USS George Washington wash an F-14 Tom-Cat jet fighter Monday after they docked in the Israeli port of Haifa. A U.S. aircraft carrier and other U.S. warships docked in Haifa Monday as tensions mounted between the United States and Iraq over U.N. weapons inspection (AP photo)

Crisis in Iraq raises gas mask demand in Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israelis have been flocking to gas mask distribution centres since the crisis between Iraq and the U.N. worsened last week, the Yediot Achronot newspaper reported Monday.

Fearing a repeat of the missile attacks by Iraq against Israel during the 1990 Gulf war, an average of 6,000 Israelis have been visiting the centres each day to check their gas masks or obtain new models, the newspaper said.

Before Iraq sparked the latest crisis last week by announcing the expulsion of U.S. inspectors hunting for weapons of mass destruction, about 2,000 persons visited the army centres daily for mandatory check-ups on the military issue protective gear, the newspaper said.

Yediot estimated that more

than 200,000 Israelis had not picked up the gas masks distributed free of charge by the army while tens of thousands of other people had failed to upgrade old gas masks.

Iraq fired around 40 missiles into Israel during the Gulf war, causing extensive damage and wounding dozens of people.

All the missiles fired during that war had conventional warheads, but Iraq is known to have developed nerve gas and other chemical weapons which it is suspected of hiding from U.N. inspectors.

Leaders of the U.S. Congress warned over the weekend that the U.S. could launch a new military action against Iraq if Baghdad does not back down on its decision to expel American members of the U.N. weapons inspection team.

S. Arabia, UAE will not attend MENA meeting, diplomats say

KUWAIT (R) — U.S. envoy Martin Indyk has failed to persuade some Gulf Arab states to reverse decisions in boycott an economic conference in Qatar to which Israel has been invited, diplomatic sources said on Monday.

"While Saudi Arabia said 'we can't', it also said it would not try to influence others to do the same [boycott]," said one source. "The United Arab Emirates was also firm in its view that lack of progress [in Arab-Israeli peace talks] forces it to stay away."

But the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern and Near Eastern affairs could find a more sympathetic ear in Kuwait.

In his earlier stops Mr. Indyk "stressed that by attending, the Israeli public would realise that [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's argument that Arabs do not want peace is wrong and also strengthens the pro-peace lobby in Israel," a diplomatic source said.

Most Arab states see Mr. Netanyahu as blocking the U.S.-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace talks and some have linked their attendance in

Qatar to progress in the peace process.

Mr. Indyk is due in Kuwait on Tuesday evening for talks which would include urging Kuwait to attend the Qatar conference later in November. Western diplomats said.

Mr. Indyk "urged those not going to at least send some kind of representation and stressed that the request comes from [U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine] Albright and [U.S. President Bill] Clinton," said an Arab source.

Arab diplomatic sources said Mr. Indyk had heard during his current tour strong criticism of what some see as Washington's failure to put enough pressure on Israel to push the peace process forward.

Western diplomats in Kuwait say the tiny state, freed of a seven-month Iraqi occupation by the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf war allies, might send at least a minister of state to the Doha meeting.

Western diplomats said Washington favoured representation equal to the level of its team to the annual Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic

conference, expected to be headed by Ms. Albright.

Western diplomats said that although Bahrain and Oman, like Kuwait, had not yet announced final decisions, they could also boycott the event or send low-level teams.

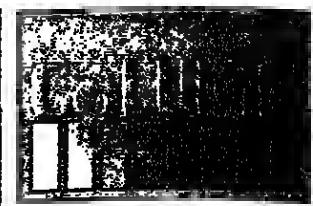
Kuwait was due to decide on the issue in October but held back until Mr. Indyk's visit, they added. It has given no official indication of its intentions.

Some Kuwaiti parliamentarians have supported a call by three Kuwaiti Islamist groups urging the state to "announce complete and clear objection" to the conference and urged Qatar to cancel the event "in an initiative to safeguard Arab unity and Arab and Muslim rights."

Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday joined other regional chambers and said it would not attend.

Analysts in Kuwait say Qatar might boycott the annual Gulf Arab summit if Kuwait missed the MENA conference.

Kuwait hosts this year's event in December.



Pupils bring own firewood to school in cold Romania

BUCHAREST (AFP) — It's "bring your own firewood" for children forced to attend school in parts of cold, depressed northern Romania. Pupils in Gura Humorului have been asked to bring several logs a day to warm the icy classrooms or face the closure of schools in the area, where winter temperatures plummet well below freezing, the daily Zina newspaper said Monday. And in several towns, thousands of students last week refused to attend classes to protest the lack of heating. The Romanian education ministry is suffering from a dire lack of funds and cannot revamp schools, many of which are in extremely bad shape.

Oldest Dutch player hangs up his boots

LEIDEN (AFP) — A Dutch great-grandfather has finally hung up his boots after a football career spanning 65 years that has shot him into the Guinness Book of Records. Wim Blankenstein, 75, played his last match Sunday in Voorschoten, near The Hague. He is officially the Netherlands' oldest player. Blankenstein began playing seriously at the age of 10 before going on to enjoy a distinguished amateur career as he worked in the police force. The sprightly great-grandfather said he felt he still had a few years of football left in him but was retiring for the sake of his team mates. "They could all be my sons or grandsons and they've seen enough of me," he said.

French book awards go to Chinese, U.S. authors

PARIS (AFP) — France's prestigious Prix Médicis literary award was bestowed Monday on French author Philippe Le Guillou, while a Chinese and an American author were also honoured. The foreign Médicis prize went to U.S. writer T.C. Boyle for his novel "America," published in French by Grasset, while China's Jia Pingwa won the foreign Femina prize for "La Capitale Docteur" (The Fallen Capital), published here by Stock.

Spice Girls becoming new commodity

LONDON (AFP) — The Spice Girls, who released their second album, have brought "pop-marketing" mixing music, publicity and business — to new, lucrative heights in their short two-year history. The phenomenally popular group, the biggest in Britain at the moment, is present everywhere, from television to deodorant ads, in what is seen as both a reflection of their success and an unabashed bid to market their new album, "Spiceworld." The "Fab Five," as they call themselves, were splashed again Sunday across page one of the Sunday Telegraph — their second front page Telegraph photo in a week — in their colourful outfits and trademark platform shoes.

The Asian prince is 'a swindler'

MELBOURNE (AFP) — A man who claimed to be an Asian prince as he pledged \$1 billion to the U.N. is a failed Australian builder who left his wife and children 19 years ago, reports said Monday. "Prince" Haji Mohammad Al Sagoff Van Eldik received a standing ovation when he promised the donation to the U.N. global electronic trade mission at a multi-media conference here on Friday. But the Australian newspaper said he was known as Bep Van Eldik to his relatives in Queensland. The relatives, who say he still owes them thousands of dollars, scoffed at his claim to have been a billionaire prince exiled 18 years ago from North Borneo.

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